



# Looked After Children Policy

Helping and supporting Looked After Children  
and Previously Looked After Children.

|                            |                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Creation Date</b>       | <b>12<sup>th</sup> May 2015</b>      |
| <b>Implementation Date</b> | <b>1<sup>st</sup> September 2015</b> |
| <b>Review Frequency</b>    | <b>Annually</b>                      |
| <b>Last Reviewed</b>       | <b>December 2023</b>                 |
| <b>Approval</b>            | <b>Full Academy Council</b>          |
| <b>DfE Status</b>          | <b>Non-Statutory</b>                 |

## Equalities Impact Screening

|   |  |    |  |         |          |       |
|---|--|----|--|---------|----------|-------|
| Date of screening: December 2023  |  |    |  |         |          |       |
| Name of person completing screening: Kelly Jefferies  |  |    |  |         |          |       |
|   | Does this policy have the potential to impact on people in any of the identified groups? |    | What is the expected impact of this policy on any of the identified groups |         |          | Notes |
|   | Yes  | No | Positive   | Neutral | Negative |       |
| <b>Age</b>  |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Disability</b>   |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Gender Reassignment</b>  |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Race or Ethnicity</b>  |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Religion or Belief</b>   |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Marriage</b>   |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Pregnancy/ Maternity</b>   |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Sex</b>  |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b>   |  | x  |  | x       |          |       |
| <b>Carers / in-care</b>   | x  |    | x  |         |          |       |
| <b>Should the policy have a Full Equalities Impact Assessment?</b> No   |  |    |  |         |          |       |
| <b>If no – please state reasons:</b>  |  |    |  |         |          |       |
| The policy aims to support children in care and their carers. The policy is designed to have a positive impact on these students. |  |    |  |         |          |       |

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## 1. History of most recent Policy Change

| Date                            | Page           | Change  | Origin of Change<br>(e.g. TU request,<br>Change in legislation)  | Actioned By  |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|--|--|
| <b>12<sup>th</sup> May 2015</b> | Whole Document | Creation of new policy following review of existing policies and changes to legislation         |  | Cameron Shaw<br>Vice Principal                                 |
| <b>March 2017</b>               | Whole Document | Policy Review   |  | Cameron Shaw<br>Vice Principal                                 |
| <b>February 2019</b>            | Whole Document | Policy Review   | Change in legislation for Previously Looked After Children 2018  | Ian Garforth<br>Vice Principal                                 |
| <b>June 2020</b>                | Whole Document | Policy Review   |  | Lou Coles,<br>SENDCo<br><br>Victoria Boynton<br>Vice Principal |
| <b>April 2021</b>               | Whole Document | Policy Review   |  | Lou Coles<br>SENDCo<br>Sophie Elsbury<br>Inclusion Lead        |
| <b>September 21</b>             | P7 and P14     | Updated contact details, reference to data protection, reference to Designated Teacher for PLAC | Changes to requirements to have a Designated Teacher for PLAC. CLF requirement for explicit reference to data protection; changes to staffing. | Lou Coles<br>SENDCo  |
| <b>November 2023</b>            | Whole Document | Policy Review   |  | Lou Coles<br>SENCO   |

## 2. Legislative Compliance

This policy has been written as guidance for staff, parents or carers and young people with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- The Children and Young Persons Act (2008): Section 20 Education
- Roles and Responsibilities for the Designated Teacher for Children in Care (DCSF 2009)
- Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools (DCSF 2009)
- Pupil Premium information
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Promoting the education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (February 2018) Statutory Guidance
- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018

## 3. Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The Academy recognises that:

- Young People who are in the care of the Local Authority or Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) have the same rights as all young people, but may have additional needs due to attachment issues, early neglect, separation and loss, trauma and many placement moves. These barriers to learning can affect their educational outcomes and their personal, social and emotional development.
- The terms 'Children in Care' (CiC) and 'Looked After Children' (LAC) are interchangeable. BBA chooses to use the term 'Children in Care' (CiC) following a consultation with children and young people in Bristol through The HOPE Virtual School<sup>1</sup>(Bristol's virtual school for children in care), as their preferred term.
- There are commonly understood reasons (Social Exclusion Unit Report:2003) why young people who are in the care of the Local Authority often fail to make expected progress in education:
  - Placement instability
  - Higher than average absence
  - Insufficient help if they fall behind
  - Unmet needs - emotional, mental, physical

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<sup>1</sup> The HOPE Virtual School helps Bristol children in care and care leavers do the best they can in their education. The HOPE also provides information and guidance about previously looked after children at a Bristol education setting.

We at Bristol Brunel Academy will do for young people in care what we do for all young people - only more so. We recognise that young people in care often have additional barriers to learning and therefore require additional support. We aim to ensure that young people in care excel, as we aim for all young people to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us as happy and secure individuals, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that their education does matter.

We will listen to what young people in care tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised through various means including liaison with The HOPE School, other local authorities, Student Council, surveys, carers, social workers, and health professionals.

Bristol Brunel Academy strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and care status of members of the school, young people should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Bristol Brunel Academy will specifically support young people in care by:

- Ensuring an effective induction when joining the Academy or when coming into care whilst already on the Academy roll.
- Balancing high levels of support with educational challenge.
- Ensuring that each CiC has a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in line with statutory guidance.
- Ensuring that each PLAC will have an annual high-quality education review as well as the opportunity to meet with key workers in the Learning Support Evening held 3 times a year.
- Linking each CiC or PLAC to a key worker they relate well to.
- Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities, including their Virtual School Head, and specialist agencies and ensuring they are kept fully informed of students progress, attainment and wellbeing
- Encouraging and supporting young people in care to take responsibility for their learning.
- Engaging young people in care in learning outside the classroom and at after-school activities.
- Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance.
- Giving integrated but low-profile support in school for each CiC or PLAC so that they are not made to feel different from other young people.
- Planning for future transitions e.g. to further or higher education.
- Ensuring that CiC or PLAC specific Pupil Premium Funding (PP) is targeted to meet their specific needs.
- Recognising that they may have missed aspects of their education or social development and put in place plans to help them catch up.
- Running specific raising aspirations events targeted at looked-after or previously looked-after children.

## 4. Definitions and Designated Teacher

### 4.1 Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- Young people who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- Young people who are the subject of a care order or interim care order
- Young people who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child
- Young people who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A Child in Care may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part-time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a temporary care placement.

The Children Act 1989 has been supplemented by the Children & Social Work Act 2017, which outlines:

- Changes to the role of Designated Teachers
- The requirement for mental health training for the Designated Teacher
- The status of Previous Looked After Child

A previously looked after children (PLAC) are pupils who are no longer looked after by the local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

### 4.2 Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher for CiC and PLAC at Bristol Brunel Academy is:

| Role  | Name          | Contact  |
|---|---------------|--|
| Designated CiC Teacher<br>Designated PLAC Teacher | Marius Dan    | <a href="mailto:marius.dan@clf.uk">marius.dan@clf.uk</a>       |
| Designated CiC Lead<br>Designated PLAC Lead       | Jennifer Ross | <a href="mailto:jennifer.ross@clf.uk">jennifer.ross@clf.uk</a> |

The role of the Designated Lead is outlined in 7.3 in this document and follows the statutory guidance entitled The Designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities Feb 2018.

### 4.3 Councillor

The named Councillor for Children in Care at Bristol Brunel Academy is:

| Role                             | Name          | Contact                            |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Designated CiC / PLAC Councillor | Nicky Goodall | <a href="#">via Academy Office</a> |

## 5. Supporting those in Care

### 5.1 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All young people in care must have a Care Plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The Care Plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the CiC’s official school record. The Academy and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping young people in care to achieve and enjoy their learning. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the CiC, carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care. These meetings will be led and coordinated by the Designated Lead for CiC.

The PEP should include challenging, curriculum-based targets and support the CiC’s educational progress. If the CiC has an Education, Health and Care Plan, this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

### 5.2 Additional funding – CiC and PLAC Pupil Premium

Young people in long term care and PLACs are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined from government policy.

The Academy is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible young people in care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.



The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

The Designated Lead for CiC will report to the Council in the Annual Report on CiC on how this is used and the impact that it has.

### **5.3 Personalised tuition**

All young people in care or who were previously looked after children (PLAC) are entitled to additional personalised tuition in English and/or Maths, outside of the core curriculum, as part of the government scheme even if they appear to be reaching expected levels. Bristol Brunel Academy is committed to prioritising all young people in care for this tuition, and allocating Pupil Premium to fund it where required. This tutoring may be 1:1, 1:2 or small group as is deemed most appropriate to the needs of the individual(s).

### **5.4 Admission/Induction Arrangements**

Young people in care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the Academy or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the Academy's expectations and processes and the CiC will meet with the Designated Lead for CiC. The Designated Lead for CiC will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the CiC is made to feel supported in our Academy. Consideration will be given to giving the CiC a peer mentor if this will support their progress.

On admission, records will be requested from the CiC's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the CiC, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When young people already on the Academy roll enter care, the Academy will ensure that the CiC meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the Academy procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and an initial PEP meeting must be held within 28 days.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/Academy book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

### **5.5 School Trips and Special Activities**

We aim to ensure that young people in care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent.

## 5.6 Leaving Arrangements

When a CiC/PLAC leaves the Academy we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school or Further/Higher Education institution if appropriate. Where possible, if a destination is known in advance, the future institution will be invited to the final PEP to confirm transition arrangements. All Year 11 Young People in Care will be asked if they would like their preferred post-16 provider to be invited to their PEP as required by the LA guidance.

## 6. Complaints procedure

If a CiC, PLAC, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Lead for CiC, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the CiC, PLAC, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Principal, in which case the complaint will go straight to the chair of the Academy Council.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the child / young person's education. This meeting may include the named Academy Councillor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Principal's response.

Students who wish to make a formal complaint against the school or about their care will be advised of the support available for young people in care through Reconstruct<sup>2</sup> and encouraged to look at the page on Bristol's children in care R Voice website <https://www.reconstruct.co.uk/participation/>

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### 7.1 Academy Council

- The Academy Council will ensure that the Designated Lead for CiC and named Academy Councillor undertake appropriate training.
- Councillors will consider an annual report from the Designated Lead covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, CiC with Special Educational Needs or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of The HOPE (Bristol's Virtual School for Children in Care). The Report will also outline how the dedicated Pupil Premium funding has been allocated and the impact that it has had.
- The Academy Council, Principal and Senior Leadership Team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:

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<sup>2</sup> Reconstruct are an advocacy agency for CiC (<https://www.reconstruct.co.uk/advocacy/>)

- The Academy has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CiC on roll;
- The Academy's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC;
- Resources are allocated to support the Designated Lead to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CiC.

## 7.2 Principal

The role of the Principal is:

- To ensure that, in partnership with the Academy Council, the Designated Lead, has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of young people in care;
- To make sure that the Designated Lead contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the Academy who is likely to be involved in supporting young people in care to achieve;
- In partnership with the Academy Council, to monitor the effectiveness of the role of the Designated Lead;
  - To oversee the development of the policy on CiC and PLAC;
  - To evaluate the standards and achievement of CiC and PLAC and report these to the Academy Council and discuss them at Core meetings.
  - To ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support young people in care;
  - To ensure the Designated Lead has access to Mental Health training.

## 7.3 Designated Lead

The Designated Lead has responsibility for helping Academy staff understand the barriers and effective strategies which affect how CiC/PLAC learn and achieve. The role of the Designated Lead is:

- To promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CiC/PLAC learn;
- To promote the educational achievement of every CiC/PLAC on the Academy's roll;
- To contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put young people in care at a disadvantage;
- To make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place for CiC / PLAC
- To promote a culture in which CiC/PLAC are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- To be a source of advice for staff about strategies appropriate to support the individual needs of the child / young person
- To organise, monitor and evaluate additional tuition arrangements for CiC/PLAC and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home;
- To have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the CiC's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the Academy;

- To set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all young people in care and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer;
- To act as the named contact for social care and health professionals and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;
- To have lead responsibility for helping Academy staff to understand the things which can affect how young people in care learn and achieve.
- To keep the local authority tracking system up to date and ensure accurate return of all progress data.
- Attend relevant training and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding CiC /PLAC;
- Ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account.
- Establish good working relationships and communications with carers and families ensuring information is received and timely notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews;
- Provide support and sanctuary to help settle a CiC /PLAC into the school, and at other times; ensure that the CiC/PLAC feels safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support;
- Ensure the transfer of records if a CiC/PLAC moves school;
- Provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required;
- Seek and prioritise meetings with, and referrals to, appropriate external agencies in situations that require external support.

#### **7.4 All Staff**

Improving the outcomes for CiC and PLAC by ensuring they are included in the life of the Academy is the responsibility of all staff. Their role is:

- To ensure that all young people in care or who have been previously looked after are made to feel welcome and included;
- To have high expectations of young people in care's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- To be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- To understand the reasons which may be behind a CiC's/PLAC's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other young people;
- To understand how important it is to see young people in care as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- To appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a CiC's/PLAC's status;
- Ensure that no CiC / PLAC becomes the victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and eradicated;
- Positively promote the self-esteem of CiC/ PLAC.

In addition, we will require our academy teaching and support staff to assist in the implementation and support of this policy for CiC / PLAC by requiring all staff to:

- Contribute to and understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the CiC him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.
- Be familiar with, and respond appropriately to, requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews;
- Convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.

## 8. Monitoring

The Associate Assistant Principal (SENDCo) through the Designated Lead for CiC will be responsible for the monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The Council will review the Policy every year unless there are any changes to legislation or guidance that require it to be altered in the interim.

An Annual Report on its implementation and on the outcomes for CiC, the impact of the strategies used, and the funding allocated will be presented to the Council at the end of each academic year.

An annual update relating to the inclusion of Children in Care as required by the Local Authority will also be provided.

The Associate Assistant Principal will quality assure the PEPs for CiC by sampling and the use of a checklist to maintain quality and ensure compliance with the most up to date guidance. PEPs are also quality assured by virtual schools, and monitoring sheets are provided with rating.

The Assistant Principals for Culture and Ethos, Teaching & Learning and Achievement will coordinate the working party on ensuring that CiC, as part of the disadvantaged cohort of students, are making progress in line with their peers.

## 9. Links with Other Policies

### Bristol Policies and guidance

- Admissions protocol and operational process
- Attendance plan for CiC example
- Exclusions process
- Induction and leaving processes for children in care (CiC)
- Mentoring and Tracking Pupil Progress
- Personal Education Plan Guidance
- Process for New Children in Care/ Children in Care Moving
- When a child comes into care
- Information sharing protocol for CiC and care leavers in FE
- Model confidential school file for CiC

- Principles for administering Bursary funds for CiC/care leavers
- Process for agreeing part time timetable
- Process for Year 11-12 transfer for CiC
- Pupil Premium briefing
- Children in care education website

### Academy's own policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Inclusion Policy (including SEND Information Report)

## **10. Data protection implications**

The procedures linked to this policy requires some collection and storage of data including permissions for access to care dog therapy and care dog handler details. The Data Protection Policy for Staff and Record Retention Policy will be adhered to during implementation of the policy.