


Every Child Matters Academy Trust

Children in Care & Care Leavers Policy

Written by:	Mrs G Foster-Wilson	
Approved by Chair of Trustees	Signature	Name
		W.Ward
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1. **Aims & Principles**

The aims of the school are to ensure that;

- School policies and procedures are followed for children in care and care leavers, as for all children.
- All children in care and care leavers have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- We provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual child's needs and ability.
- Children in care and care leavers take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Carers and social workers of children in care are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Children in care and care leavers are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.
- Children in care and care leavers are fully supported to achieve to their full potential.
- Education for children in care and care leavers is consistent with the commitments of the Council's Pledge to Children in Care - [Children in care - information just4u \(barnsley.gov.uk\)](http://barnsley.gov.uk).
- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for children in care and care leavers.
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of children in care and care leavers and supports other staff members to do this too.
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Safeguarding
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- SEND

2. Definitions

Children in care are registered pupils that are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

Care leavers are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were in care of a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:
 - A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
 - A special guardianship order
 - An adoption order
- They appear to the governing board to have:
 - Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
 - Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

Personal Education Plan (ePEP) is part of a child in care's plan of support that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's children in care, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of care leavers.

3. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy includes requirements set out in 'Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children in care' under section 52 of the **Children Act 2004** and the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (Nov 2009, updated Feb 2018). It also takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 and complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in care and care leavers at our school.

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children in care and care leavers.
- Promote the educational achievement of every child in care and care leaver on roll by:
 - Working with the Virtual School Head
 - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how children in care and care leavers learn and achieve
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of children in care and care leavers.
- Promote a culture in which children in care and care leavers are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities.
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with children in care and care leavers.
- Work directly with children in care and care leavers and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of personal education plans.
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children in care and care leavers are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Involve parents and guardians of care leavers in decisions affecting their child's education.

The designated teacher will support children in care by:

- Ensuring that children's personal education plan's meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs.
- Taking overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in personal education plans.
- Monitoring and tracking how children in care attain and progress under the targets in their personal education plan.
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their personal education plan.
- Ensuring that the identified actions of personal education plans are put in place.
- During the development and review of personal education plan's, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils.
- Ensuring that;
 - A child in care's personal education plan is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure it is up to date and contains any new information since the last review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered.

- Personal education plans are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced.
- The updated personal education plan is passed to the child's social worker and the Virtual School Head ahead of the statutory review of their care plan.
- Transfer a child in care's personal education plan to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version.

The designated teacher will support both children in care and care leavers by;

- Ensuring their specific individual needs are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding.
- Working with the Virtual School Head to agree how pupil premium funding for children in care can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- Helping to raise awareness of pupil premium funding and other support available for children to parents and guardians of care leavers.
- Playing a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support care leavers.
- Encouraging parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use.
- Ensuring teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of children in care and care leavers in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.
- Being aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of children in care and care leavers, and ensuring that teachers also have awareness and understanding of this.
- Ensuring the SEND code of practice, where it relates to children in care and care leavers, is followed.
- Making sure that personal education plan's work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a child in care or care leaver may have.
- Ensuring that, with the help of the Virtual School Head, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in children in care and care leavers, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary.
- Ensuring that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in children in care and care leavers and understand where the school can draw on specialist services.
- Putting in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for children in care, and use the results of these SDQs to inform personal education planning.
- Putting in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of children in care and care leavers.

The designated teacher will support relationships beyond the school by:

- Proactively engaging with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of children in care and care leavers.

- Discussing with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom.
- Being open and accessible to parents and guardians of care leavers and encourage them to be actively involved in their child's education.
- Proactively building relationships with local authority professionals, such as Virtual School Heads and SEND departments.
- Considering how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for children in care and care leavers, such as:
 - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans.
 - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform Virtual School Heads when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action.
 - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption.
 - Making sure that, if a child in care or care leaver moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process.
- Seeking advice from Virtual School Heads about meeting the needs of individual care leavers, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians.
- Making sure that for each child in care:
 - There is an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress.
 - School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents.
 - Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips.
- Where a child in care is at risk of exclusion:
 - Contact the Virtual School Head as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
 - Working with the Virtual School Head and the child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour.
- Where a care leaver is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the Virtual School Head on avoiding exclusion.

5. Admissions

The Governing Body endorses Barnsley council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against Children in Care. This stance is also endorsed by the Barnsley Admissions Forum. Due to care placement changes, children in care may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary, we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Geraldine Foster-Wilson (CEO). At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.