



Hotwells

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children in Care Policy **(to include previously looked after children)**

Last reviewed: January 2025

Next review date: January 2027



Who are our Children in Care?

Definition: 'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

'Previously Looked After Children' is a term that refers to children who are adopted from the care of an English local authority under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and **Children's Act 2002** or who, immediately **after** being **looked after** by an English local authority, became the subject of a special guardianship or **child arrangements order**.

This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and associated guidance for The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children (2018)

Governor Responsible: **Anthea Bruges**

Designated Lead: **Kee Jones**

Rationale:

The governing body of Hotwells Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of Children in Care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000 and DfEE/DOH Guidance 2000 and the Children Act (2004). The Children Act places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential".

The key measure as outlined in the guidance:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.
- All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require. The first of which should be triggered by the child's social worker.

- The guidance does not expect a (PEP) for previously looked after children. Hotwells Primary School will continue the best practice of individualised plans for children who are in and have come from care if the parents of the child/children wish to have one.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.

The role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher:

The Designated Teacher should:

- Be an advocate for Children in Care.
- Ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for the child and carer/s (and parent/s where possible). Note any specific requirements, including care status.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed (within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer/s (and parent/s if possible), in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any SEND Support Plan, Pastoral Plan, Supporting Behaviour Plan, or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed.
- Ensure that each child in Care has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary. This should include the appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus funding and its effectiveness.
- Ensure staff and governors receive relevant information and training.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis.
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible.
- Encourage Children in Care to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

The responsibility of the Governing Body:

The Governing body should:

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children: The Education (Admission of Looked After Children England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.

The responsibility of all staff:

Staff have the responsibility to:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

Confidentiality:

Information on looked after children will be shared with relevant school staff on a “need to know” basis.

The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Record keeping and information sharing:

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

- A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC/YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.
- Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.
- It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.
- Ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give Children in Care equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school.
 - The National Curriculum and public examinations
 - Additional educational support where this is needed.
 - Extra curricular activities.

Staff development and training:

The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the guidance from the DfES and DoH (as above).