



School Policy for the Education of Children in Care (CiC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) & Children with a Social Worker

Audience:	School and academy staff, Local Governing Bodies
Adopted:	November 2020 Reviewed November 2022 Reviewed February 2024
Other related policies / procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy ● Equality Policy ● Anti-Bullying Policy ● Positive Behaviour Management Policy ● E-Safety Policy ● PREVENT Strategy & Duty Guidance HM Gov ● Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2023 ● Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy ● Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Gov 2023
Owner	Crofty Safeguarding Lead
Policy / procedure model	<p>MAT policy: all Crofty schools use this policy</p> <p>Aligned: Policy to be adapted to school where indicated</p> <p>School policy: specific to needs of the school</p>

At _____ School we believe that all Children in Care, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve in line or better than all children from Cornwall and children nationally. We, as a school community, aim to be champions and advocates for these children, and will take a proactive approach to support their success and achievement, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development and enhancing life outcomes.

Designated teacher (DT) for CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker: _____

Second contact if DT unavailable: _____

School staff and Governors are aware of the 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children', Feb 2018 DfE & Extended Duties for Children with a Social Worker

- There is a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement & attendance of CiC, PLAC & Children with a Social Worker, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004 (still remains in place despite Act updates).
- There is a dedicated Governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its vulnerable learners.
- Take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of these children attending their school.
- Designated teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Head Teacher.

Our aims to support Children in Care, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker:

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Close the gap - bring the educational attainments of our vulnerable children in line or better to those of their peers.
- Ensure appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus* (see below for more information*) to support education.
- Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age, ability and emotional understanding. This includes access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum. *Following lessons learned during the pandemic – ensure our children have access to online learning, access to an IT device and that regular contact with our children is maintained should it be required.*
- Identify our school's role to promote and support the education of our vulnerable children.
- Always ask the question: 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- All settings are required to have a DT for CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker, who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers,

birth parents (as appropriate), social workers and health on a wide variety of educational and care issues. This person will be required to make financial decisions in the best interest of the child.

- All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for vulnerable children by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures, both within the school and with other agencies.

PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (PLAC)

Once a child leaves local authority care, a child is no longer looked after. However, their educational, social and emotional needs will not instantly change. Previously looked after children keep the educational entitlements they had while in care. This is the case for children who leave care through:

- an adoption
- special guardianship (SGO)
- child arrangements order (CAO)

Educational entitlements include priority admission and Pupil Premium Plus. Schools and local authorities have a duty to promote the educational achievement of children who have left care.

Holding a PEP for a previously looked after child is not a statutory requirement. _____
School chooses to complete one as a tool to maintain positive communication with home, track and monitor strategies and interventions and make best use of funding.

Whole school approach:

- Teachers are fully engaged in the PEP process and attend all PEP meetings.
- The school celebrates the achievements of CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker.
- Teachers should have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- The young person will need to have a special, trusted adult in school that is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- For CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker, there should be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the child from school.
- All teachers within the school are made aware of the needs of these children and actively promote their best interests.
- Trusted adults in school will need to be sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status.
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker.

- The designated teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies, and that high educational expectations are maintained.
- A nurturing and trauma informed approach and understanding of ACES will help to support vulnerable children.
- Support the engagement of CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker in out of school hours learning.
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance.
- Teachers can help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis.
- Staff are aware that being or becoming a 'Child in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given.
- Teachers can be aware of a variety of emotional issues and trauma that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process, including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem.
- Teachers need to be aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.
- CIC have access to Pupil Premium Plus – from September, £350 will be allocated to every child from day one of being in care by the Virtual School head. School will receive this at the end of each term. A bid can be made via the EPEP to top this up by a further £350 if required. See Education Endowment Fund / Sutton trust for guidance on use, good practice and impact of PP+.
- PLAC have access to Pupil Premium Plus (£2345/ year) by declaring their status in each October Census.
- School adhere to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) with reference to Article 28 & 29 –'The Right to education and the goals of education'

Expectations of a Designated Teacher (DT):

- To ensure the child receives a copy of their termly PEP.
- To advise the Virtual School (Awena) if the DT is going to change/leave the school. Or if you change your email address (GDPR).
- To liaise with your finance department with regards to fixed rate and additional PPP payments you are expecting.
- For CiC - To attend PEPs in the summer term for those who are going to transition to your school/establishment.
- To ensure the education sections of the PEP are completed to a good standard (assessed as green by the Virtual School).
- To ensure the child's voice is established within the PEP paperwork.
- For CiC- To submit your PEP within 10 working days of the PEP meeting being held.
- For CiC - To complete a PEP every term (at the very least).
- For CiC - If there is a change of date for a PEP meeting you will ensure the date is amended on Welfare Call to reflect this.

- To inform the Virtual School of any changes you require or if there are any issues in order for them to be resolved at an early stage.
- It is a statutory requirement for a DT to attend one training session (Induction/Network/Conference) with the Virtual School per term. This will be entered on the S157/175 annual safeguarding return as part of the new annual audit and peer review system.
- To inform the Virtual School if any CiC, PLAC and Child with a Social Worker is out of school/ education for 6+ days.

The head teacher or designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

GOVERNORS – in Crofty the member of the governing body with safeguarding responsibility will also monitor the following:

- Number of CiC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker on school roll.
- Number of CiC with up-to-date PEPs.
- Overall attainment and progress of groups -CiC, PLAC and Children with a Social worker in the school / performance compared to peers and national.
- Number of CiC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker with SEN and statements / EHC Plans- level of support in place.
- Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of these learners.
- Risk assessments if not in school.
- Number of CiC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker who have been excluded in previous 12 months.
- How LA supports educational achievement of these learners.
- Use of Pupil Premium Plus spend and impact on attainment.

This information will be monitored through the annual MAT safeguarding audit and information will be shared with the Safeguarding trustee.

Governors will receive role specific training from the Trust Safeguarding Lead annually.

Special Educational needs: *(see Cornwall SEND graduated response document)*

- Any special educational needs are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made – early identification and action is key.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when CiC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker are underachieving and or not thriving at school and have early interventions to improve and support the child.
- Contact needs to be made with the Virtual School as soon as concerns are raised.
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need or EHC Plan, then ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly Statutory Care Reviews / termly PEP meetings; dates can be obtained from the social worker.
- Please refer to SEN Code of Practice for further information.

Admissions and transitions:

- CIC and PLAC have priority on school admission.
- Prioritise CIC and PLAC within schools' own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for CIC and PLAC.
- Adhere to Cornwall Council School Admission protocol.
- Awareness of 'Placement of pupils out of their chronological year group', Cornwall Council guide.
- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- We will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known.
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

Attendance:

- Send weekly attendance report to Virtual School. From September 2023 – it will be statutory for all schools to submit attendance data in line with DFE guidance and new WONDE system.
- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established.
- Inform Education Welfare Officer / Social Worker / Awena - Virtual School if any concerns about attendance.
- Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.
- If a child is on a protection plan, ensure Social worker and Carer are contacted if child is absent from school.
- CiC and PLAC should not be taken out of school for holidays, only for 'exceptional circumstances'.
- There should be no unauthorised absences for CiC and PLAC.
- Safety plans to be put in place where a CiC/ PLAC / Child with a Social Worker is on a reduced timetable or Children Missing Education or Children Missing Out of Education (CME/CMOE) and on an EOTAS / EOTIS package.

Suspension:

- Identify any CiC, PLAC and Child with a Social Worker who is at risk of suspension and contact Awena- Virtual School Education Welfare Officer, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the learner missing days from school.
- Ensure in the case of a fixed term suspension that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the suspension, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the suspended pupil to continue his/her education.

- Make sure in the event of any exclusion, contact is made with the Virtual School with details of the suspension outlining the reasons why the child has been suspended so that an appropriate response can be made.

Multi-agency liaison:

- The Designated Teacher will need to liaise closely with carers, birth parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues including homework, kit and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared.
- There should be a well-planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the young person's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented.
- There needs to be clear understanding about the role and responsibility of school staff in relation to the young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved.
- School staff will need to share positive perceptions and high expectations of the young person with other professionals but especially with the young person.
- The school should be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the natural parents.
- Designated teachers should ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations.
- Encourage each child in care to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self –esteem and learning.
- Support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making.

At risk:

- Schools to share information with appropriate professionals if they feel a CiC, PLAC and Child with a Social Worker is at risk in any way.
- Schools to be aware and have a safety plan in place with regards to absconding, going missing and or any risk of exploitation.

Appendix 1.

Designated Teacher's Guide to completing a Personal Education Plan

Overview

Every Child in Care between the ages of 3 & 18 must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) whether they are in; Early Years, Education, Training, Employment or NEET.

It is a **Statutory Requirement** that a PEP meeting should take place within 10 school days of the child coming into care or if there has been a significant change in their life e.g. change of School, Carer or Social Worker. Subsequently a PEP will then need to take place each term.

In order to be valid, the meeting must be held between the Designated Teacher, Social Worker, Carer and when appropriate the child. The child should be encouraged to take part in the PEP meeting as it is their meeting and their views about their education **must** be taken into consideration.

Cornwall Virtual School uses an electronic PEP (ePEP) system called Welfare Call.

<http://extranet.welfarecall.com/>

Please note you will not have access to the Welfare Call system until you have a CiC attending your establishment. It is the DT role to complete the PEP for education.

The PEP must be completed in a manner that supports requests made by the school to support a child in their learning and also backs up requests for additional funding.

By reading a child's PEP you should be able to know the child.

There is an expectation that the ePEP is fully completed on the Welfare Call system within 10 working days of the PEP meeting having taken place.

Collate the data and information beforehand for;

- **The views of the Child** – This should be the first document you complete
- **Attendance & Exclusion information**
- **Attainment** (Secondary schools it is advisable to email teachers a week in advance to get their report on engagement and wellbeing, progress and achievements)
- **Engagement & Wellbeing**
- **Compile a list/obtain up to date reports from who is involved with the child class/subject Teachers, CAMHS, Ed Psych etc**

DT's are required to participate in appropriate termly DT Forums, or induction and joint agency training with The Virtual School – *there is a requirement to attend to comply with your annual safeguarding return (the S175/157)*

If there are safeguarding concerns for a CiC, PLAC or Child with a Social Worker, contact and advice should be sought from The Virtual School and MARU (Multi-agency referral unit) as per safeguarding procedures.