



West View Primary School

Children In Our Care (CIOC) Policy (including Previously Cared For Children)

Policy approved by Local Governors: January 2026

Date for Review: January 2028

Definitions

Children In Our Care (CIOC) are defined as children who:

- Are provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours under the Children Act 1989, sections 20 and 21
- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989, part 4
- Are subject to a placement order

Previously Cared For Children are defined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as children who:

- Are no longer looked after by an LA because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State Care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Local authorities across the country do refer to these pupil groups in different ways. For example, they may be referred to as Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). This policy uses the appropriate terminology as applied and recognised by Hartlepool Local Authority because this is the authority in which the school is based.

Aims

At West View Primary School, we endeavour to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety and individual care and attention to all of our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their academic, social, emotional and mental health development
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation and statutory guidance
- Plan support for Children In Our Care and those who are Previously Cared For and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure that we meet their individual needs
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life
- Help pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:



- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#)
- [Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#)
- [Academies Act 2010](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK](#)
- [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school documents and policies:

- Accessibility Plan

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural (SMSC) Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Transition Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Key Roles and Responsibilities	
<p>Emma Rutherford: Executive Headteacher for Vulnerable Pupils Tel: 01429 284370 Email: Emma.Rutherford@hartlepool.gov.uk</p>	
<p>Jemma Nicolle: Virtual School Headteacher Tel: 01429 523035 Email: Jemma.Nicolle@hartlepool.gov.uk</p>	
<p>Jade Casey: Education Officer for Children In Our Care (CIOC) Tel: 01429 284396 Email: Jade.Casey@hartlepool.gov.uk</p>	
<p>Lauren Furness: Designated Teacher for Children In Our Care (and those Previously Cared For) at West View Primary School Tel: 01429 267466 Email: lauren.furness@westview.adastraschools.org</p>	
<p>Michelle Clarke: Link Governor for Children In Our Care (and those Previously Cared For) at West View Primary School Tel: 01429 267466 Email: michelle.clarke@westview.adastraschools.org</p>	
<p>Kathryn Shingles: Pupil Premium Link Governor at West View Primary School Tel: 01429 267466 Email: hwvkathryn.shingles@westview.adastraschools.org</p>	

Local Governors are responsible for:

- Complying with their duties under legislation, having regard to [KCSIE](#) guidance and ensuring that policies, procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times

- Adopting a whole-school approach to safeguarding arrangements, ensuring that these are central to the school's processes
- Holding the school to account on how it supports Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For, including how the Pupil Premium Plus funding (PP+) is used and their level of progress
- Working with the Local Authority to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are Children In Our Care or Previously Cared For
- Ensuring that the school has a coherent policy for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
- Reviewing and approving the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance
- Ensuring that there are no unintended barriers to the admission of Children In Our Care or those Previously Cared For - either at normal transition or any other point of the school year
- Appointing a Designated Teacher (DT), who is appropriately qualified to support the educational achievement of Children In Our Care and those who are Previously Cared For
- Ensuring that the Designated Teacher has access to appropriate training, resources and support
- Ensuring that staff (as appropriate to their role and responsibility) have the information they need in relation to each Child In Our Care or Previously Cared For child
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are cared for under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
 - Contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For safe
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst Children In Our Care or those Previously Cared For
- Ensuring that Children In Our Care or those Previously Cared For have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if and where necessary
- Ensuring that they receive feedback from the Headteacher regarding the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis

The Headteacher, who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Designated Teacher (DT), is responsible for:

- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to Local Governors on the following:
 - The number of Children In Our Care or those Previously Cared For in the school
 - An analysis of attainment as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of these pupils, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions of these pupils compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware that supporting Children In Our Care is a key priority
- Ensuring PP+ funding is managed effectively
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of Children In Our Care or those Previously Cared For
- Understanding the role of staff within the Virtual School and working with them to promote the educational achievement of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
- Working with the Virtual School Headteacher, other Virtual School staff and social workers to:

- Promote the educational achievement of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
- Develop and implement each pupil's Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Discuss how PP+ funding can be used to support the pupil's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP
- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies, ensuring that these meet the needs of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they understand the support available to Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand what can affect how Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Acting as the main contact for social care and the DfE
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations for all
- Ensuring that Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For are involved in setting their own targets
- Advising staff on teaching strategies when working with Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
- Ensuring that Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support
- Ensuring that the child's progress towards targets is monitored
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure that all pupil needs are met
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and acting in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keeping up-to-date records of respective social workers

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Liaising with the class teacher, Designated Teacher, specialists and parents/carers when considering interventions to support the progress of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding
- Developing an understanding of the role of social workers, Virtual School Headteachers and carers, and how the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the LA looking after the pupil
- Understanding the importance of involving the pupil's parents, carers or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education
- Being a contact for parents, carers or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their pupil's progress at school
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL (or a deputy) as soon as possible
- Promoting the self-esteem of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For

The Virtual School Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For placed within and outside of the authority
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational attainment and progress of Children In Our Care as if those children attended a single school
- Ensuring that there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For who are attending the school
 - Gather information about the education placement, attendance and progress of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For
 - Ensure social workers, the Designated Teacher, the school, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the pupil's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP
 - Ensure that all Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For at the school have up-to-date, effective and high-quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes
 - Avoid drift or delay in providing suitable educational provision, including special educational provision, and unplanned termination of educational arrangements through proactive, multi-agency co-operation
 - Ensure that the educational achievement of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of Children In Our Care through the LA's Corporate Parenting Structures

[Children looked after and corporate parenting | Hartlepool Borough Council](#)

In respect of those Previously Cared For, the Virtual School Headteacher will:

- Respond to parental requests for advice and information
- Respond to requests for advice and information from the DT, and build a good working relationship with them
- Make general advice and information available to the school to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of Previously Cared For children, including promoting good practice on identifying and meeting their needs, and guidance on effective use of the PP+

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All Children In Our Care must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which is intended to serve as an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child and it will be reviewed termly, in line with timescales set by the Virtual School.

West View Primary School is aware that, wherever a child is placed, it is the responsibility of the child's social worker, supported by the authority's Virtual School Headteacher, to initiate a PEP and arrange to meet with the school and the pupil's carer/s.

West View Primary School, along with other professionals and the child's carers, will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. As a school, we will work with the Virtual School, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the pupil's PEP are implemented without delay.

The Designated Teacher will work with the Virtual School to manage the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) for the benefit of the cohort of Children In Our Care, in line with their needs. Funding can be allocated to an individual in order to support their needs.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of developmental and educational needs, including:

- Access to Nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age and meets their identified developmental needs
- Ongoing catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with their schoolwork
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests

The Virtual School Headteacher and the Designated Teacher will ensure that information is included within a child's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment. Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

Working with agencies and the Virtual School Headteacher

West View Primary School is aware that strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is vital to identifying and responding to the needs of Children In Our Care and those who are Previously Cared For. As a school, we will work collaboratively and proactively with professionals from other agencies and organisations in line with the framework of expectations outlined in the government's [Working together to safeguard children](#) statutory guidance document by:

- Collaborating with services to achieve shared goals and to share information
- Learning from evidence and sharing perspectives to evaluate provision
- Prioritising and sharing resources depending on pupils' needs
- Celebrating inclusivity and diversity and challenging discrimination
- Mutually and constructively challenging others' assumptions in a respectful manner

Information Sharing

West View Primary School recognises the importance of proactive information sharing between professionals and local agencies in order to effectively meet pupils' needs.

Staff will be made aware that whilst the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place a duty on schools to process personal information fairly and lawfully, they also allow for information to be stored and shared for safeguarding purposes, as data protection regulations do not act as a barrier to sharing information where failure to do so would result in the pupil being placed at risk of harm. If staff members are in doubt about sharing information and data protection legislation, they are encouraged to speak to the DSL.

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data will be put in place to ensure that the educational needs of Children In Our Care or those Previously Cared For are understood and met. The arrangements set out will include:

- Who has access to information regarding these groups of children and how data will remain secure

- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them
- How carers contribute to and receive information
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant professionals within the Local Authority
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities and the school when pupils move

School staff will be proactive in sharing information in accordance with data protection principles as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils. This will include sharing information about any adults with whom a pupil has contact, which may impact the pupil's safety or welfare, where necessary.

As a school, we will be as transparent as possible by telling families what information they are sharing and with whom, provided that it is safe to do so. We will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For (where they have an allocated social worker), in addition to carers and/or their parents/carers.

The Designated Teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the relevant social workers as well as the Virtual School Headteacher regarding Children In Our Care who are absent without authorisation.

[16. Tees Multi-agency Information Sharing Protocol - Tees Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Procedures](#)

Training

The Designated Teacher and other school staff will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- Admissions arrangements - [School admissions: How to apply - GOV.UK](#)
- Attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)
- Managing behaviour that challenges - [Behaviour in schools - GOV.UK](#)
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Safeguarding - [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](#)
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Suspensions and Exclusions - [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#)
- Trauma Informed Practice - [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK](#)

All training will ensure that staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep all children safe.

Safeguarding

Please also refer to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

At West View Primary School, we recognise that children most commonly become Children In Our Care or those who are Previously Cared For because they have experienced abuse and/or neglect and because of this, they can be at potentially greater risk in relation to safeguarding.

As a school, we recognise that Children In Our Care and those who are Previously Cared For have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care. We will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst Children In Our Care and those who are Previously Cared For.

Where a child is a Child in Our Care or a Previously Cared For child and they have a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding e.g. responding to absence from education where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The Headteacher, Miss Furness, will implement appropriate pastoral support services throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL (or a deputy) any concerns that they have relating to Children In Our Care or Previously Cared For children in line with the processes outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the Designated Teacher if they believe that a Child In Our Care or a Previously Cared For child is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have had traumatic early experiences of abandonment or rejection.

Mental Health

Please also refer to the school's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

All staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties which can impact their behaviour and education. The Designated Teacher and the Senior Mental Health Lead will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The Designated Teacher and/or Senior Mental Health Lead will work with the Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health difficulties, understand the impact that these difficulties can have, and how to access further assessment and support, where necessary. This includes being 'attachment aware' whereby school staff understand the impact of attachment disorders on a child's emotional development and learning. A whole school approach will be adopted to identify and support pupils with attachment difficulties.

As a school, we understand that the increased frequency of mental health difficulties amongst Children In Our Care and those who are Previously Cared For may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health difficulties are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the Designated Teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with Children In Our Care and those who are Previously Cared For, are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

A strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) will be used on a termly basis to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about a child's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

All school staff will work together to promote the mental health and wellbeing of all children, including those who are Children In Our Care or Previously Cared For.

The school's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health difficulties that Children In Our Care or those Previously Cared For may face.

Suspensions and Exclusions

Past experiences of Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For will be considered when designing and implementing the school's policies in relation to behaviour, exclusions and suspensions. We will have due regard to the DfE's statutory guidance regarding school suspensions and permanent exclusions and recognise that suspending or excluding Children In Our Care can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities that school provides. The Headteacher will balance this recognition alongside the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all staff and pupils, devising strategies that take both into consideration.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the Virtual School Headteacher will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, we will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a Child In Our Care to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

As part of the termly review of a pupil's PEP, any concerns about their behaviour will be recorded, alongside information on how they are being supported to improve this and reduce the likelihood of suspension or permanent exclusion.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Where a Child In Our Care, is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Headteacher/Designated Teacher will contact the Virtual School Headteacher as soon as possible so that they can consider what additional assessments and/or support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the pupil's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

Where the school has concerns about the behaviour of a child who was Previously Cared For which could result in them being suspended or permanently excluded, the child's parents or the Designated Teacher may seek the advice of the Virtual School Headteacher on strategies to support the child to avoid suspension or exclusion.

Where a Child In Our Care is excluded, the school will document the provision of immediate suitable education in the pupil's PEP.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Please also refer to the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

The Designated Teacher and the SENCO will ensure that Children In Our Care and those Previously Cared For who have SEND are supported in line with the school's SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability e.g. where a child is in residential care and, thus, will have their Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

In cases where pupils have an EHCP, the Designated Teacher will work with the school's SENCO and the Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that the child's EHCP works in harmony with their care plan and PEP to tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the pupil's needs are being met.

Support for those children who do not need an EHCP will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

For those children who are Previously Cared For, the SENCO, class teacher, Designated Teacher and specialists (if appropriate) will involve parents, carers and guardians when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the Virtual School Headteacher will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for those children.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by Miss Furness (Designated Teacher and the Headteacher) with support from the wider Safeguarding Team, which includes the Senior Mental Health Lead and SENCO.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2028.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders following approval by Local Governors.