



Children in Care Policy

July 2026



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Review Date	July 2029
Written by	Colin Raraty
Chair's Name	Steph Green

The name of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care for the school:

Colin Raraty/Annabel Brown

The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Children in Care in the school:

Lauren Dearsley

There has been a concern for many years that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage.

In more recent times, there has been a greater focus on disadvantaged children and the support they receive. For Essex County Council the support, attainment and outcomes for disadvantaged children has been a strategic priority.

However, the following areas are still areas of concern for children in care:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. All schools should have a policy for Children in Care that is subject to review and approval by the Governing Board.

The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in supporting these vulnerable children but also the specific procedures and roles required to ensure their success.

Definitions and Statutory Framework

To ensure clarity and alignment with the Children Act 1989 and Department for Education (DfE) guidance, this policy applies to two distinct groups of children:

- Looked-After Children (LAC) / Children in Care (CiC): Pupils who are registered at this school and are either in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.
- Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC): Pupils who are registered at this school who were looked after by a local authority in England and Wales but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or a Child Arrangements Order. This also includes children who appear to the Governing Board to have been in state care outside of England and Wales and were subsequently adopted.

Collaboration with the Virtual School Head (VSH)

The school works in close partnership with the Essex Virtual School Head (VSH), who is responsible for monitoring, supporting, and promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children as if they were in a single school. The VSH also acts as a vital source of information, advice, and guidance for the parents and guardians of previously looked-after children. The Inclusion Team will also work with any other Local Authority Virtual school if a child is placed out of county.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher must be a qualified teacher (and ideally a member of the Senior Leadership Team) to ensure they possess the necessary leadership authority to influence school provision, manage resources, and champion the needs of these pupils.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Act as the central point of contact within the school for any matters involving LAC and PLAC, liaising directly with the local authority, Virtual School, social workers, and carers.
- Promote a trauma-informed, attachment-aware school culture, ensuring all staff understand how early adversity, trauma, and separation affect a child's learning, behavior, and mental health.
- Work directly with the Social Worker and the Virtual School Head to ensure the implementation, tracking, and regular review of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding grant is effectively allocated, deployed, and tracked to directly improve the educational, social, and emotional outcomes of the eligible child.
- Track and monitor the academic progress, attendance patterns, and behavioral interventions of both LAC and PLAC cohorts compared to their peers, addressing underachievement proactively.
- Coordinate closely with the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) to ensure any underlying learning or speech and language needs are identified and supported early.
- Ensure smooth transition arrangements and rigorous information-sharing when a child transitions into the school or moves on to secondary education.

The role of that governor

The named governor will report to the Governing Board on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked-after pupils in the school;
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. Making Good Progress
- Additional education support;

- Extra-curricular activities;

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Every child in care must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) initiated within 20 working days of entering care or joining the school. The PEP is a statutory document initiated by the Social Worker and developed collaboratively with the Designated Teacher, the child, and their carers. This will identify specific areas of concern and include achievable, measurable targets.

Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance;
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Behaviour (ensuring trauma-informed behavior support is applied, and avoiding exclusion measures wherever possible);
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any) — managed in partnership with the SENCO;
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).

The PEP will be updated and reviewed at least termly (three times a school year) or at the point of any major change, contributing directly to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation of the educational targets within the Plan.

Note: Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) do not have a statutory PEP. Instead, the Designated Teacher will maintain regular, collaborative educational review meetings with the child's parents or guardians to monitor progress and agree on appropriate adjustments or school-level support.

Accountability and Reporting

The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children will report annually to the Governing Board on the progress, attendance, and outcomes of all relevant children against the key indicators outlined above. To protect safeguarding and pupil privacy, this report will remain fully anonymised and will not identify individual children.

Education Law defines who is a parent very widely. It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. This means it is possible for someone who does not have parental responsibility to be a 'parent' because they have care of the child in question, for example the foster carer.

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Term/Abbreviation	Meaning
CLA	Child Looked After/Looked ter Child
CiC	Children in Care
PLAC	Previously Looked After Child
PEP	Personal Education Plan
VSH	Virtual School Head
PP+	Pupil Premium Plus Funding Grant
SENCO	Special educational Needs Co-ordinator

AI has been used to cross reference this policy with government guidelines and policies.