



Cared for Children and Previously Cared for Children Policy

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Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Cared for Children and previously Cared for Children are of real concern. Children who are Cared for often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Extol Trust endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our children. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage children to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development
- Ensure that children enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation
- Plan support for Cared for Children realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life
- Help children develop their cultural, moral and social understanding

1. 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
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2022) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

And school policies:

- Behaviour Policy inclusive of Anti-bullying Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2. Definitions

'Cared for Children (CfC)' are defined as:

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

'Previously Cared for Children (PCfC)' 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.

‘Designated Teacher’ is defined as:

- A member of staff designated to have the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of Cared for Children (including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered pupils at a school)

The Designated Teacher must be a qualified teacher who has completed an appropriate induction period and is working as a teacher at the school, this may be the Headteacher.

The ‘Virtual School’ is:

A virtual school, adopted by the Local Authority, to support the Virtual School Headteacher’s (VSH) role. The VSH and the virtual school will be a very important partner for the designated teacher and will provide an invaluable source of support and advice to designated teachers both about individual children and the education of Cared for Children more generally.

Virtual schools may be able to:

- provide information on specialist services
- help identify resources to support specific activities
- co-ordinate support that may be required beyond that which is already provided by educational services, and
- provide training for designated teachers on aspects of social care

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring all schools have a coherent policy for Cared for and previously Cared for Children
- Reviewing the school’s policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the schools regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis
- Have oversight of CfC and PCfC educational performance

The Local Governing Body (LGB) is 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 and child protection, ensuring it is central to the school’s processes.
- Holding the school to account on how it supports CfC and PCfC, including how the Pupil Premium+ (PP+) is used and their level of progress.
- Working with the LA to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are CfC or PCfC.
- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of CfC and PCfC.
- Reviewing the school’s policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.

- Ensuring that there are no unintended barriers to the admission of CfC and PCfC 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 CfC and PCfC.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for CfC and PCfC has access to appropriate training, resources and support.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each CfC or PCfC
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after 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 CfC and PCfC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst CfC and PCfC.
- Ensuring CfC and PCfC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual safeguarding report produced by the DSL to evaluate the progress of CfC and PCfC in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the DT for CfC and PCfC.
- Allowing the DT the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the local governing body annually on the following:
 - The number of CfC and PCfC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of CfC and PCfC, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions of CfC and PCfC, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CfC is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for CfC and PCfC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of CfC.
- Understanding the role of the VSH and working with them to promote the educational achievement of CfC and PCfC.

The DT for CfC and PCfC is responsible for:

- Working with the VSH and social worker to:
 - Promote the educational achievement of CfC and PCfC.
 - Develop and implement their PEP.
 - Discuss how 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 affecting CfC and PCfC to ensure the policies meet the needs of CfC and PCfC.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to CfC and PCfC.

- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand what can affect how CfC and PCfC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring CfC and PCfC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies when working with CfC and PCfC.
- Ensuring that CfC and PCfC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding CfC and PCfC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Playing a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the local governing body, which details the progress of all CfC and PCfC.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of CfC and PCfC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Highlighting the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns regarding CfC and PCfC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor, where a child becomes a care leaver, and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CfC and PCfC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, DT, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of CfC and PCfC.

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, VSHs 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, guardians or carers in decisions affecting their child's education.
- Being a contact for parents, guardians or carers who want advice or have concerns about their pupil's progress at school.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards CfC and PCfC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding CfC and PCfC due to their increased vulnerability to harm and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of CfC and PCfC.

The VSH is responsible for:

- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of CfC and PCfC placed within and outside the authority.
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational attainment and progress of CfC 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 CfC and PCfC who are attending the school.
 - Gather information about the education placement, attendance and educational progress of CfC and PCfC.
 - Ensure social workers, the DT, 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 all CfC and PCfC 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 the educational achievement of CfC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of CfC through the LA's corporate parenting structures.
- In respect of PCfC's the VSH 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 the DT
 - make general advice and information available to the school to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of PCfC, including promoting good practice on identifying and meeting their needs, and guidance on effective use of the PP+

4. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The Trust is aware that all CfC must have a care plan, and that PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The Trust understands that the PEP 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 Trust is aware that, wherever a pupil is placed, it is the responsibility of their social worker, supported by the authority's VSH, to initiate a PEP and arrange to meet with the school and the pupil's carer.

The school will ensure that children's PEPs reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the pupil and will be reviewed termly.

The DT will liaise with the VSH and social workers to share information and act as the in-school lead on how the PEP is developed and used to make sure the pupil's progress towards education targets is monitored.

The school, in collaboration with the pupil, carer, and other professionals will collaborate to ensure completion of the PEP and that PEP is used as a working document intended to support the pupil's educational needs, raise their aspirations and improve their life chances.

The school will work with the VSH, 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 school is aware that PP+ for PCfC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school, and will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of the cohort of CfC, or PCfC, and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The DT will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the pupil's educational attainment and progress

5. Working with Agencies and the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH)

The Trust is aware that strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is vital to identifying and responding to the needs of CfC and PCfC.

The school will work proactively and collaboratively with other professionals in 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 share information.
- Learning from evidence and sharing perspective 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

The 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 will be encouraged to speak to the DSL.

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data will be put in place to ensure that the education needs of CfC and PCfC are understood and met. The arrangements set out will include:

- Who has access to information on CfC and PCfC 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 LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments 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.

The school will aim to be as transparent as possible by telling families what information they are sharing and with whom, provided that it is safe to do so.

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers of CfC and PCfC, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The DT will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding CfC who are absent without authorisation.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CfC and PCfC.

The school will coordinate review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of CfC with their statutory care review.

6. Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of Cared for and previously Cared for Children will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting children to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

The local governing body will ensure that staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep Cared for and previously Cared for Children safe through training.

7. Safeguarding

Schools will recognise that many Cared for and previously Cared for Children have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave children 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 Cared for and previously Cared for Children as soon as possible.

Where a Cared for or previously Cared for Child has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of Cared for and previously Cared for Children can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over Cared for and previously Cared for Children in line with the processes outlined in the Trust 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 a Cared for and previously Cared for Child is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on children who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8. Children's Mental Health

Cared for and previously Cared for Children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher 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 will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on Cared for and previously Cared for Children, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst Cared for and previously Cared for Children may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with Cared for and previously Cared for Children are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these children.

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

Each school's senior mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of Cared for and previously Cared for Children.

Individual school's SEMH Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that Cared for and previously Cared for Children may face.

9. Suspension and Exclusion

We believe it is vital past experiences of Cared for and previously Cared for Children are considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.

As part of the termly review of a child's PEP, any concerns about their behaviour will be recorded, alongside information on how they are being supported both in and out of school to improve this.

Where schools have concerns about a Cared for Child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. The school will engage proactively with the social worker and/or carer of a Cared for Child to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour.

Where a Cared for Child is likely to be subject to a suspension (or permanent exclusion), the designated teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible. The VSH will work with the designated teacher and other relevant individuals to consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and eliminate the need for a suspension (or permanent exclusion).

Schools will inform carers that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child's behaviour.

Schools will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance '[Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#)' and recognise that suspending or excluding Cared for Children can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides.

10. Children with SEND

Support for Cared for Children with SEND will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

The SENDCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously Cared for Children.

The designated teacher and the SENDCO will ensure that Cared for and previously Cared for Children with SEND are supported in line with the schools SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting children with SEND may lack applicability for Cared for Children.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Trust or in response to a change in legislation. The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2026.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.