Low Hill Nursery School

Supporting the Education of children & Young People in care,

Previously in care and other young people with a social worker or in kinship care

Adopted by: Low Hill Nursery School

On: 5th October 2026

Review: October 2027

Introduction

Low Hill Nursery School believes that, as educators and Corporate Parents and in partnership with key stakeholders, we have a legal, moral, and professional duty to safeguard and promote the education of our most vulnerable pupils, particularly children and young people in care and previously in care, and other children and young people with a social worker or who have ever had a social worker.

The term 'children and young people in care' includes children placed by a local authority with family members, foster carers or in a residential care home. They also include those placed in care through a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or by a voluntary agreement with the child's parents under section 20 of the Act. The terms can also be used to refer to children entered into police protection and those involved in the youth justice system.

Previously looked after children (DfE definition) are those who have left care via an adoption order, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Arrangements Order (CAO).

The term 'other children with a social worker' is used to refer to all children who were assessed as needing a social worker at any time due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons, which includes all those subject to a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection plan. This includes children aged from 0 up to 18 in all education settings.

A kinship care arrangement is when a close family member or friend look after a child for a temporary or permanent amount of time, including where an SGO or CAO has been granted. The child will not necessarily have been in care previously.

We know that a secure and successful education is a major factor in improving the life chances of vulnerable young people. However, we recognise that, nationally, the above pupils have significantly underachieved compared with their peers, and continue to experience many challenges that disrupt their education and continue to reduce their life chances as they get older. All four cohorts are also characterised by high levels of Special Education Need and Disability (SEND).

The statutory duties of the designated teacher for children and young people in care were extended to include children and young people previously in care by the Children & Social Work Act 2017[1]. The DfE further extended the role of the Virtual School Head (VSH) in 2021 to include promoting the educational outcomes of all children with a social worker. In 2024, the VSH was further

[1] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents

extended to include children in kinship care arrangements. DfE guidance states that the virtual head's role with regard to these wider cohorts does not include direct interventions for individual pupils, however, or the provision of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) or management of pupil premium funding. Rather, it is a broader approach which involves:

- understanding and addressing the barriers and challenges these groups face in attending school
- strengthening partnerships between education settings and local authorities
- establishing a culture of high aspirations and promoting good practice that helps these children to progress and achieve well in education.

It is incumbent on schools, within the framework of this guidance, to work with virtual heads and their teams in providing additional support for these children, and particularly pupils in care and previously in care. Given the overlap between these cohorts, however, and the fact that they are consistently among our most vulnerable children, we feel it is appropriate and useful to have a joint school policy to help ensure that they are properly prioritised and supported.

We intend, through this policy, to work toward closing the achievement gap. We will promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement of children and young people in care or previously in care, and of children with a social worker and in kinship care, in our school. As champions for disadvantaged pupils we will prioritise and focus our resources to secure the best possible outcomes.

Background legislation

This policy is based on the following legislation and statutory guidance:

1. *Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the Act") and The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.*
2. *The Local Authority statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children*
3. *The Children and Families Act 2014, which requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer to make sure that its duty is properly discharged - referred to as the Virtual School Head – and for all maintained schools to appoint a designated teacher pupils in care and previously in care.*
4. *The local authority duty (currently none-statutory) to extend the role of the VSH to include all children with a social worker and in kinship care arrangements.*

How will the impact of the policy be evidenced?
The impact of the policy will be seen through improvements in the following key outcomes for children & young people in care, and previously in care, and pupils with a social worker:

- ✓ Reduction or zero rate in school exclusions
- ✓ Improved school attendance
- ✓ Improved attainment at statutory assessment stages
- ✓ Improved and maintained rates of progress and attainment
- ✓ Improved quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for pupils in care
- ✓ The views of children & young people (as recorded in PEPs and captured though the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and wider consultation)
- ✓ Ultimately, an increase in children and young people in care, care leavers and (pending the availability of data) young people who have had a social worker and children in kinship care aged 16+ who are in Education, Employment & Training (EET), and the numbers accessing higher education (HE).

Partnership working
We will work closely together with key local authority departments including the Virtual School Head (VSH) and Virtual School team, social care, and other education providers and relevant agencies, to enable the best possible outcomes for children and young people in care and previously in care, children with a social worker and children in kinship care through flexible and proactive partnership working.

The Governing Body
The governing body will:

- Ensure that there is a named designated teacher for children and young people in care and previously in care on the school roll and that (s)he is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities in line with statutory guidance.
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and other key staff in ensuring that the attendance, attainment and progress of pupils in all four cohorts is promoted in line with statutory and none-statutory responsibilities
- Nominate a named governor for children and young people in care, and previously in care. The Nominated Governor will attend relevant training, such as that provided by the virtual school, and take a leading

responsibility for challenge and support of the school in raising the achievement of these pupils, as well as an interest in the progress of children with a social worker and in kinship care. As part of this, the nominated governor should have a termly meeting with the Designated Teacher, with a clear agenda, to address school improvement issues related to pupils in care and previously in care. They will also ensure that an annual report (as a minimum) on the progress of pupils in care and previously in care is provided to the governing body by the designated teacher - see Appendix for suggested report template. The nominated governor will present this report to the wider governing body in partnership with the designated teacher.

- In relation to other pupils with a social worker, the Nominated Governor or Chair of Governors should maintain close links with the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and other key staff to ensure that the attendance, engagement and progress of vulnerable pupils is prioritised and any barriers to progress are understood and addressed without dela

The Senior Leadership Team

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that the Designated Teacher and Nominated Governors have the level of seniority, protected time, resources, training and other support required to perform the roles effectively.
- Ensure that children and young people in care and previously in care, children with a social worker and children in kinship care are prioritised in school policy & procedure and in the allocation of resources, in line with DfE guidance, to ensure that they are fully supported to access the best of what the school has to offer.
- Ensure that pupils in care and previously in care and previously in care are given top priority in school admissions.
- Explore every possible alternative to a temporary or permanent exclusion, in line with national, local, and school admissions policies, due to the disproportionate effect that exclusion can have on the most vulnerable pupils. Instead, we will work together proactively with all key partners including the local authority, using every resource in our control (including alternative provision where appropriate), to solve problems.
- Avoid resorting to unofficial exclusions to resolve behavioural or other issues
- In the event of a serious issue, which might otherwise lead to permanent exclusion, the child may be placed on a fixed-term exclusion and an emergency review of the PEP (if the pupil is in care) and/or other relevant plans / provision will be called and attended by key personnel, e.g. carer/parents, social worker and (where appropriate) representatives from the Virtual School team, Family Help/social care, Inclusion Team etc, to resolve the issue. Pupils in these cohorts will be prioritised for Educational Psychology support where appropriate, as

well as referral to local authority inclusion panels and other support services including mental health support where appropriate.

- If we feel that we are unable to meet the child's needs, work with appropriate agencies to ensure that any special educational needs, including social, emotional, and mental health needs, are assessed in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015) as a priority. This should include, where appropriate, referral for a statutory education, health and care needs assessment.
- On occasion, by shared agreement and in the best interests of the child, a managed move to another provision may be considered to avoid a permanent exclusion or continued underachievement. We will consult with the virtual school in such cases, and work in partnership to achieve the best outcome for the child.
- Ensure that all vulnerable pupils have an appropriate, 25-hour offer of education, other than, in exceptional circumstances, for a fixed period which has been agreed with parent/carer, social worker and virtual school as being in the child's best interests (such as part of a transition plan).
- Where a modified timetable may be in the best interests of the child, and if the child is in care, this will firstly be discussed and agreed in a review of the Personal Education Plan, thereby taking into account the views of the child, carer and social worker. If the pupil is previously in care or has a social worker, the child's social worker and carers/parents will be consulted. For children in kinship care, carers will be consulted. In all cases, the local authority's Inclusion Team will be informed of modified timetables.
- Take a proactive approach to sourcing the DfE-recommended first day provision for fixed term exclusions for children and young people in care and previously in care, in view of the additional pressures and risks that exclusion can place on disadvantaged children, and extend this principle to pupils with a social worker and in kinship care.
- Make our school "attachment aware" and "trauma informed" and fully able to meet each child's learning, health & wellbeing needs, by ensuring that key staff keep up-to-date with relevant policy and legislation and attend relevant training, such as that provided by the Virtual School Team and Educational Psychology Service, and through key sources of learning such as the Attachment Research Community (ARC).

The Designated Teacher

We will have a Designated Teacher for children and young people in care and previously in care. This will be a member of the senior leadership team who is therefore able to affect changes in policy and procedure where appropriate. The Designated Teacher (DT) will:

- Be an advocate for all children in this school who are in care / previously in care, ensuring that their voice is heard and acted upon.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information (1) on a need to know basis (2) in line with school safeguarding and information-sharing protocols and (3) in such a way that it helps to ensure that the educational needs of the child can be understood and met
- Maintain an up to date record of all such children who are on the school roll, in partnership with the virtual School Head as appropriate
- Provide the Virtual School Team with data on the performance, attendance and attainment of Wolverhampton children and young people in care, when requested.
- Be a central point of contact, working with any previous educational settings to ensure a smooth induction and transition into school.
- Liaise with the child, parent/carer & social worker to ensure that, for children and young people in care, a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed and reviewed within statutory timescales (and more often if necessary) to support accelerated progress. Ensure that the PEP remains a 'live' plan and that actions are completed within agreed timescales, with adequate arrangements for monitoring and reviewing success and next steps. Seek additional support with PEPs from the Virtual School team as required.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus is used in the most appropriate way to support the individualised learning targets of children in care and previously in care, as agreed in the PEP meeting for children inn care, and/or on-going communication with parents/carers, social workers and/or virtual school. For pupils with a social worker and in kinship care, ensure that Pupil Premium if applicable, higher needs funding, recovery funding and other applicable funding streams are used proactively to support the needs, strengths and targets of pupils - see below for further information.
- Contribute to social care review meetings and intervention plans, SEND reviews and other meetings and plans as required & appropriate.
- Fulfil school safeguarding protocols effectively, be alert to any child protection issues, and know what action to take.
- Inform the child's carer/parent and (where applicable) social worker when a child in any of the above cohorts is absent from school without notification or excluded, and consult the Virtual School, Attendance and Inclusion teams, as appropriate, if problems become persistent.
- If a pupil on the school roll enters custody, maintain an interest in the young person and provide information and transition support with the secure institution in partnership with the Youth Offending Service. Where the young person remains on the school roll, ensure that appropriate education is provided in the new setting and that attendance, attainment and progress are monitored and supported appropriately.
- Attend relevant training on safeguarding and promoting the achievement of vulnerable pupils, keep up to date with relevant legislation & guidance and cascade to school staff as appropriate.

- Provide in-school training for school staff around the needs of children in these cohorts, including attachment, trauma and recovery and its implications for emotional wellbeing and behaviour management.
- Meet with the Nominated Governor or Chair of Governors termly and report to the Governing Body annually, as a minimum, on the performance of their children and young people in care and previously in care, without naming individual children
- Ensure well planned and informed transitions when a child changes school, with timely information sharing.
- Ensure that the statutory guidance on the role of the Designated Teacher is embedded within practice

All School Staff

All school staff will:

- Ensure a safe & secure environment in which vulnerable pupils are able to flourish and grow and high aspirations are encouraged
- Seek advice from the head teacher, designated teacher and/or designated safeguarding lead regarding induction, CPD and any interventions, classroom environment adaptations etc.
- Be sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged young people, including confidentiality issues
- Support the local authority in its duty to promote the educational achievement of children and young people in care/previously in care and children with a social worker.

Arrangements for Review

This policy will be reviewed as to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

The Designated Teacher's Annual Report to the Governing Body on the Progress and Support of Children and Young People in Care and Previously in Care

Purpose of Report

This report fulfils the advice for the Designated Teacher for children and young people in care/previously in care to provide (at least) an annual report to the governing body, outlining the progress of the pupils in these cohorts and the support that is provided for them

Please not that this is not an exhaustive list of areas for discussion and should also be used to inform a termly discussion between the Designated Teacher and Nominated Governor, or Chair of Governors, as well as a template for the annual report.

This Report Covers (Term & Year):	
Name of School	
Name of Designated Teacher	
Name of Nominated Governor, if applicable	
Designated Teacher's position within the staffing structure	
What training has the designated Teacher and/or other school staff received relating to pupils in care and other vulnerable pupils in the last year?	
How many children and young people in care/previously in care attend the school, how many are in the care of Wolverhampton City Council?	
How many have a statement of SEN or EHCP, and for what type of need? How many have identified SEN, but do not have a statement / EHCP?	
Do all pupils in the care of Wolverhampton City Council have up to date, high quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs)? If not, please provide reason / comment	

What is the current attainment of each of the pupils in the care of Wolverhampton City Council? Please do not use names and add rows as needed	Child	English	Maths	Is this below, at or above expected levels?
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
Are these pupils making expected (or better) levels of progress, and if not, what actions are in place to address this?	Child	Expected Progress +?	Reason / Comment	
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
Is attendance less than 95% for any of these pupils? If so, please give reason / comment and current actions to address this.				
Are any of these pupils following modified or part-time timetables? If so, please add reasons / comment and plans in place to extend their provision to full-time				
Have any of these pupils had suspensions or permanent exclusions in the last school year? If yes, what has been done to support reintegration and prevent further exclusion?				
Which other agencies has school worked with to support these children (including, but not limited to, local authority stakeholders)?				
How is the school using its Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) grant allocation to support children and young people in care / previously in care?				
Any other information?				