Rook’s Nest Academy

Child in Care (LAC/CIC) Policy

Reviewed: - September 2026

Rook's Nest Academy Children in Care (Looked After Children's) Policy

Rationale

Children in Care (CIC) (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of CIC children have suffered a disruptive childhood and experienced adverse events. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under- achievement when compared to their peers. Evidence from Ofsted and statutory advisory bodies indicates that CIC often achieve poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer CIC children progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being. In addition, Many CIC children have numerous changes in their placements resulting in a high level of disruption to their education.

Legal Framework

Under the Children and Families act 2014, a child is looked after by the Local Authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (Section 44)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order(Section 38)

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are "accommodated" by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

- There is no person who has parental responsibility for them
- The child is lost or abandoned
- The person who has been caring for him/her is prevented from providing him/her with suitable accommodation or care
- A child if it will safeguard or promote his/her welfare

The term "in care" refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts – this is where the local authority believes that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer 'significant harm' if he/she remains with his or her birth family. They may apply for a care order to assume parental responsibility for the child. While it is possible that children on care orders live with their parents or other family members if that is what the court decides, most will live with foster carers.

For all children who receive more than 75 days of 'short breaks' in every 12 months CIC/LAC status applies and an Independent reviewing Officer is appointed. As the care arranged is not continuous academic attainment does not have to be reported in the same way to the DfE.

All these groups are said to be "Children in Care (CIC) / Looked After Children" (LAC). They may be looked after by the local authority (Wakefield) or in the care of another authority but attending our school.

The Policy

Purpose

The purpose of our policy at Rook's Nest Academy is to promote the welfare, educational attainment, achievement and progression of Children in Care on role of the Academy. The Local Authority (Wakefield) has a statutory role to play for all children in its care and acts as a Corporate Parent.

The name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children Is Mrs S Brooks, Inclusion manager.

The name of the Safeguarding Governor is Mrs N Lomas

The Designated Member of Staff for Looked After Children in Flyers is Ms K Dawson (head teacher)

Jackie Roper Virtual school Head, Wakefield Virtual school children and young people's service, Wakefield council, 01924 304139

Michelle Roe: Early Years and Primary Lead for Wakefield Virtual School

Further information can be found at: Wakefield Virtual School - Care4us

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

Within school

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how looked after children learn.
- Make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets.
- Be a source of advice for staff about adapted teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of assessment for learning.
- Make sure that Children in Care are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.

- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within school.
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by CIC children and that staff understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child in care on role is monitored, tracked, promoted, and where relevant, accelerated.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement or absence from school.
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding, where relevant, is used to support the learning objectives for the student and that the impact of this resourcing is evidenced. (Please see attached Virtual school Pupil Premium Plus Policy)
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Children in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school clubs, extra -curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc.
- To act as an advocate for Children in Care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers and health professionals.
- To hold a supervisory brief for all CIC Children ensuring all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carers, is used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and progress, and that this information is kept up-to –date.
- To report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis on the outcome of Children in Care.

<u>Work with Individual Children in Care</u>

- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their care plan (where appropriate);
- To ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan. The PEP sets out appropriate targets and strategies to promote and accelerate their achievement of Children in Care and close the gap between them and their peers.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium that applies to CIC who have been in care for six months and over is targeted at improving attainment and achievements.
- To consult with the child or *an* adult and ensure that they have an appropriate adult who will attend school events e.g. parent evening, sports, drama and other events to provide support and encouragement.

Liaison with other Partners

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection register, ensuring that all CIC are safeguarded.
- To help co-ordinate education so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the child's care plan.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to Children in Care at Care Plan and PEP meetings.
- For the Designated Person to be the named point of contact for other professionals.
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information or school records between agencies and other schools.
- To ensure that the school admits CIC in line with the Admissions Code of practice; schools should admit CIC separate to 'In Year Fair Access Protocols'.

Training

- To develop a knowledge of Vulnerable Children/ Education Inclusion procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority and other providers.
- To attend training for Designated Teachers as appropriate;
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate

The role of the Governing Body and the named Governor for Children in Care

Areas that may be reported are:

-The number of CIC in school

-The progress of CIC, as a discrete group, in comparison with the attainment and progress of other pupils.

- The attendance of CIC, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.

-The level of fixed term/ permanent exclusions and

-Pupil destinations after leaving school

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

-The National Curriculum

- Public examinations

- Additional educational support

- Extra -curricular activities

- Pupil Premium allocations targeted to raising achievement

Responsibility for Children in Care in School

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the CIC Child are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this

information should be that of the Head Teacher and/ or the Designated Teacher for Children in Care.

It is appropriate for Learning Support Assistants to have knowledge that the young person is being looked-after only when they are directly involved with the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of their usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head Teacher or the Designated Teacher for Children in Care.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records (including the PEP) will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with the carer/parent/social worker. A date will be agreed for a new PEP within 20 school days of a new CIC being admitted. An appropriate school admissions meeting will take place.

Involving the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly will depend on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, their carer and their social worker are all working together to help them achieve in school.

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/ teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that copies of all reports (e.g. end of year reports) are forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Foster Carer or Residential Social Worker. It should be agreed at the PEP meeting what information the parents will receive, this needs to be in line with the legal framework.

Schools and education and social work colleagues within Children's Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings e.g. to have an Annual or a Statement review and a Personal Education Plan or review.

It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances e.g. If the school is considering a change of course, if there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision e.g. behaviour or attendance.

Assessment, Monitoring and Reviewing Procedures

Each child in care will have a care plan that will include a {Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is jointly developed by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify success, specific areas of focus and include achievable targets. Areas for consideration in the PEP will include;

- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)
- Development need (short or long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations)
- Educational data so that progress can be tracked between Key Stages
- Extended learning opportunities
- Involvement in out of school hours activities
- Special Educational Needs (If there are any)
- Attendance
- Behaviour

The PEP will be updated in line with statutory requirements and contribute to the statutory reviewing of the Case Plan. The PEP will be stored on the local authority's case management system and circulated to all key parties who attend the PEP meeting.

A significant number of CIC children also have special educational needs and the new SEN Code of Practice 2015 and these needs will be incorporated onto a Supporting Me to Learn Plan in conjunction with the requirements of the PEP, both of which should be reviewed termly.

Any concerns regarding Children in Care and their education can be addressed through the Virtual Schools (previously REACH) Team at Wakefield Council and the Virtual Head Teacher can provide advice to ensure that any children placed in Wakefield have access to education provision that meets their needs. This can include guidance and support regarding admissions, exclusions etc. The team can also provide advice on accessing specialist support. The Virtual school Team/Virtual Head Teacher can be contacted on 01924 304248.

Policy date: September 2026

To be reviewed: September 2027