Water Orton Primary School

Policy for children with a social worker

This includes:
Child in Care (CiC) & **Previously Child in Care (PCiC)**
as well as those supported with a
Child Protection plan (CP) or **Child in Need (CiN) plan**
due to safeguarding reasons

Policy written Sept 2025
Review Sept 2026

Objectives

To implement the guidance for all children with a social worker.

That is:

- the statutory guidance to promote the educational achievement and welfare of all Children Looked After (CLA; known as Children in Care CiC in Warwickshire) and Children Previously Looked After (PLA; known as PCiC in Warwickshire) on the roll of our school
  Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- to outline how our school will implement the non-statutory guidance that is the '*duty to promote the education of children with a social worker in the last 6 years'.*
  DfE Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements

Intention

This new guidance includes all children who are most vulnerable and educationally disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and in care or previously in care.

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a supportive and stable base for all children known to a social worker, and in promoting their academic, social, and emotional development.

We understand the need:

- for **regular whole school staff training on trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice in the school,** so that all adults, both non-teaching and teaching, fully understand and are sensitive to the barriers to learning that children can experience.
- **to work in a *'relationship-based'* way** so that all children feel valued, nurtured and a part of our school community.
- to **establish a culture within the school that improves the well-being of both staff and pupils** through an informed understanding of the inter-relationship between learning, well-being and safeguarding.

- to **provide all children and young people on our roll with a breadth of learning experiences** that will champion the needs of all children to ensure they make rapid educational and social progress throughout their education journey in this school.

We will use our school policies and practice to:

- create a '***calm, safe and supportive environment where children and young people want to attend and where they can learn and thrive.***'
- **ensure learning is taught as well as 'caught'** to influence positive behaviour management and relationships between all adults and children who are part of this school. '***The behaviour policy is the starting point for laying out our vision and is one of the important ways this school culture is communicated to pupils, staff, and parents and carers.***' (See *DfE Behaviour in schools*).
- ensure **everyone within the school will interact with respect, kindness, and integrity.** Our school's culture and values are manifested through the behaviour of all members of the school community - parents and carers, school staff, visiting specialists and pupils.

Equality and Diversity

The implementation of this Policy requires a reflection on those learners who have many overlapping experiences: discrimination because of a protective characteristic, SEND, poverty, other adverse childhood experiences. Supporting these learners to achieve will raise achievement for all. The expectation is that all learners receive a high-quality, ambitious education; that is inclusive of all learners. All schools and other education providers must meet their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010.

Impact

This section sets out the expected impact to be achieved through the implementation of the policy in school.

- A safe and secure environment is provided where educational progress and stability is always central to the planning
- All adults are equipped with the understanding of the impact that the experience of trauma and neglect can have on the way children form relationships and learn
- Staff feel confident to work within a relational approach to behaviour management or regulation strategies that take into consideration what has been learnt from recent research on the effect of trauma on the brain and the potential long-term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- The gap between the attainment of children with a social worker and their peers is narrowed, accelerated and rapid progress is made
- School-based interventions are accessed, and we will use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (see DfE *PP+*) to ensure effective impact or enable pupils to benefit from Pupil Premium funding (*Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders*)
- All CiC to have at least termly Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings each academic year and for the joint planning and quality first teaching to have measurable impact on each child's learning on a daily basis (see guidance *here*).

- All adults provide sensitive, child-led support, adopting a relationship-based approach and there will be at least one key adult with whom the child or young person has a trusted relationship and who will act as an advocate for them and take a special interest in their progress in all school activities
- School systems facilitate nurturing support, which includes a strong relationship between school staff, parents or carers and children with a social worker on roll
- Children with a social worker are positively identified within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for (see guidance ***here***).
- The Behaviour Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour, and it is understood that all behaviour is communication and staff respond with compassion and care. Sanctions that shame and ostracise children from their peers, school, community or family are avoided. An inclusive culture and positive school ethos is created for every pupil
- All children with a social worker and their families feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged into this school community

Children in Care (CiC) & Previously Children in Care (PCiC)

The role of the designated teacher

Name of designated teacher for CiC / PCiC	*Leanne Mach*

Leadership role:

- promoting the educational achievement of every CiC and PCiC on the school's roll
- collaborating with the Virtual School to promote the education of CiC and PCiC
- promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of these children matter and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
- taking responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how CiC and PCiC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- complete the annual Strength and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) for each CiC
- advocating for CiC when the behaviour policy is being implemented, promoting relational approaches and reasonable adjustments
- promoting the educational achievement of CiC and PCiC by contributing to the development and review of whole school policies

Promote a culture in which CiC and PCiC:

- can discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support

- are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system
- believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult

A source of advice for teachers about:

- differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are CiC and PCiC
- the use of assessments to improve the short and medium-term progress of CiC and PCiC, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there

Work directly with CiC and PCiC and their carers, parents or guardians to:

- promote good home-school links
- support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication
- ensure they understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home
- ensure they are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy
- encourages high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment

Develop and implement PEPs for CiC in partnership with others:

- that are reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer, and other relevant professionals
- ensuring in any one school year there will be at least 3 PEP meetings for each CiC
- ensuring PEPs are completed within statutory timescales, as outlined in the PEP guidance

Collaborate closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding CiC and PCiC are quickly and effectively responded to

The role of the Head and governing body / board of trustees

Name of designated governor for CiC / PCiC	*Laura Wadley*

- be fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CiC and PCiC
- ensure that there is a named designated teacher for CiC and PCiC who has qualified teacher status and appropriate seniority in the leadership team
- through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its CiC and PCiC (including how the Pupil Premium Plus is used) and their level of progress
- be aware of whether the school has CiC and PCiC and how many (no names)
- consult with the Head to ensure that the designated teacher is enabled to conduct her/his responsibilities in relation to CiC and PCiC

- ensure the designated teacher is able to access training needed to fulfil the role of designated teacher. Virtual School Heads agree that, as minimum, designated teachers should have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of CiC and PCiC
- support the Head, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of CiC and PCiC are met
- review the effective implementation of this policy at least every three years

Children with a social worker (CWSW: CIN / CP)

Includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons. It includes all children aged 0 to 18 across all education settings subject to a CiN plan or a Child Protection plan.

Children known to a social worker, as shown in the Government's *Children in Need review* (2019) evidenced for the first time, achieve significantly less well than others at all stages of education and that poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends.

Improving the educational outcomes of children with a social worker and maintaining high aspirations for them is a key priority for us.

We promote the improvement of the educational achievement of children with a social worker by:

- Prioritising education and pursing education in tandem with safeguarding
- Recognising the benefits to attendance, inclusion, attainment and progress that the adoption of more relational approaches to learning can have and take advantage of training offered by the Virtual School
- Promoting excellent attendance, challenging absences and working with all professionals to develop Attendance Support Plans
- Reducing suspensions and permanent exclusions by identifying concerns early and putting in appropriate support swiftly
- Being full partners in the team around the child subject to a CIN / CP plan, recognising in our policy and practice the safeguarding risk that absence, suspensions and permanent exclusion constitute for these vulnerable pupils.
- Identifying any possible additional learning needs and putting in appropriate support swiftly
- Focusing on early intervention, priority action and targeted support
- Supporting transitions
- Maintaining high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Seeking pupil and family voice to support plans
- Promoting health and wellbeing

The role of the CWSW lead

Name of lead for CWSW	*Leanne Mach*

The lead professional will:

- have appropriate seniority in the leadership team
- be empowered to fulfil their role, having sufficient time and experience to fulfil it effectively
- attend CWSW training each year to remain fully informed and that the whole school staff receive appropriate training (refer to the Virtual School *website)*
- ensure that all CWSW make accelerated and rapid progress
- inform staff when a child is allocated a social worker, recording and sharing this information with all relevant members of staff
- ensure that educational information is provided as required, within agreed timeframes
- ensure that processes are in place to inform social workers of unexplained absences, suspensions and permanent exclusions swiftly
- ensure that there is an expectation of significant communication, joint planning, and training with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school so that there is a full and informed response to understanding the needs of children with a social worker within the school and a collaborative approach with Social Care
- Include children subject to a CIN or CP plan as a separate category in reporting to governors and trustees.

See Appendix A: Partnership working

Appendix A

Partnership working

Attendance

School attendance procedures will reflect the specific needs of all children with a Social Worker to ensure that they have good school attendance and punctuality. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools, the local authority and other local partners.

Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, the school will contact the social worker, and other professionals (including the Virtual School), promptly.

Admissions

School procedures to support CiC and PCiC during admission are enshrined in the statutory codes of practice for admission:

- prioritising CiC and PCiC at the point of admission

Additional Educational Needs

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support
- use Pupil Premium funds strategically (including on pupils who do not meet eligibility criteria but need extra support due to:
    - *Being supported by a social worker (CWSW)*
    - *Used to be supported by a social worker (Ever-6 CWSW)*
    - *Are acting as a carer*

Alternative Provision

Where it is decided that AP is in the best interested of a young person, we will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision alternative to daily attendance at school will be:

- a plan that will retain the child with a Social Worker on roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for essential reporting and accountable for the PP+ if CiC or PCiC
- an agreed part of the overall PEP for the child if CiC
- full time or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the child

- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that any statutory planning, for example the Child Protection Plan or PEP will include both the school and the alternative provider

Behaviour

Our Behaviour policy reflects that a range of factors may predispose a pupil to dysregulation, disaffection and depression or other mental health conditions, which would benefit from effective risk assessment so that procedures are in place to help create conditions for early intervention and a school culture in which teachers can teach and pupils can learn effectively.

Where behaviour is if concern, or where a young person is excluded on multiple occasions, we will conduct a risk assessment using a trauma-informed approach to determine any potential concerns arising from the child or young person's presentation. The assessment will identify any steps deemed necessary to support the child or young person in preventing harm to themselves or others and improving their well-being. The risk assessment will be shared with parents/carers, and all staff who are involved with the child or young person.

Understanding the evidence that highlights the impact that exclusion can have will support informed decision-making about the appropriateness of an exclusion or suspension; but will also recognise that suspension when used in a proportionate and supportive way can have a positive outcome for the child or young person and the wider school community.

Elective home education

If a family notifies of their intention to home educate, we will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible and refer to *Elective home education guidance*.

Mental Health & well-being

We:

- understand the value of a graduated approach to assess, understand, and meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of children and young people with a social worker
- know how to identify signs of potential mental health issues for children with a social worker and how to access further assessment and support where necessary to understand the impact of issues that children with a social worker can experience
- offer targeted support to meet the needs of these children
- recognise the value of engaging the child's voice in the process of identification and support
- ensure children with a social worker are factored into the school's strategy on mental health and well-being

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for all Children with a Social Worker who have special educational needs and disabilities by ensuring:

- we adopt a graduated approach

- all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- pupils are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision
- progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight
- with the school SENCO, the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained

Safeguarding

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on any child with a social worker familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy and the current Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Suspensions & Exclusion

We will make every effort to avoid excluding these pupils in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss.

We understand that where a CiC is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher (DT) should contact the local authority's VSH as soon as possible to discuss support for the individual child to reduce harm to the child's future education and to plan the best way to resolve the situation'.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement

We will only consider permanent exclusion from school as the last possible resort for CiC and PCiC, recognising that entire living arrangements could be affected as a result.

Where multiple exclusions of a child or young person have taken place, we will seek additional support.

Suspension will be used for as short a period as possible with the aim of improving outcomes for the child or young person. The time during and after the suspension period will be used constructively to resolve the situation and ensure positive and appropriate support is in place for all.

We will use the following methods to avoid suspending or excluding a child known to a Social Worker:

- internal monitoring
- engaging in a cycle of assessing needs, planning interventions, implementing those plans, and reviewing their effectiveness
- internal nurture support
- internal coaching and mentoring support
- reasonable adjustments
- making referrals to outside agencies appropriate for enlisting support and advice for the school, child and family

- alternative provision, where appropriate
- safety and support plans
- pastoral support plans

We understand that the Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty can, in principle, apply both to the suspensions and permanent exclusions process and to the disciplinary sanctions imposed. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, governing boards of relevant settings must use their '*best endeavours*' to ensure the appropriate special educational provision is made for pupils with SEN, which will include any support in relation to behaviour management that they need because of their SEN.

Our school procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of children with a Social Worker with special educational needs. (*Regulation 4(1)(c) of the Equalities Act 2010 which means that a head teacher could only lawfully exclude a child for a reason relating to their disability, even a disability that results in the child having a tendency to challenging behaviour*).

Transitions

It is recommended that for all children known to a social worker who are in the process of transition from school elsewhere:

- there is a swift transfer of information between schools
- school visits
- early identification of a staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support and planning at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye,' in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

Warwickshire Virtual School

We may seek information and advice from Warwickshire's Virtual School as well as access training and updates.

- **Email:** *virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk*
- **Phone:** 01926 742018
- **Website:** *Warwickshire Virtual School*

For pupils looked after by another local authority we may seek information and advice from their Virtual School.