



Children in Care (CiC) Policy

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Version	Date	Author	Note of revisions
1	September 2024	Rachel Jones	
2	September 2025	Rachel Jones	Governors changed to AQC throughout Page 5- Rachel Jones added as a Designated Teacher Page 5- AQC member responsible for CiC to be assigned when new AQC is formed.

Context

The terms 'Looked After Children' (LAC) and 'Children in Care' (CiC) are often used to define the same group of young people.

When a child or young person is taken into Care by a local authority under a Court Order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority – who become their 'Corporate Parent'. Young people can also be in Care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a status known as Accommodated) where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, but this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but some may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). It is important the school attended by the child is aware of their Care status, as many children and families are supported by social care without the use of Care Orders. Foster carers will very rarely hold parental responsibility – this is assumed by the social worker. Children placed for adoption remain looked after by the local authority until the Final Order and are then classed as Previously Children in Care (PCiC) or Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). Children can also be placed under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), these children are also classed as PCiC or PLAC.

A Personal Education Plan is required for every Child in Care and forms part of their overall Care Plan. The Care Plan should be in place within six weeks of entering care and thereafter reviewed at least every six months. At St Mark's Primary School a meeting will also be held, approximately every six months, to discuss the education and welfare of PCiC/PLAC.

The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to 'achieve to and reach their full potential'.

The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles;



The role of a Virtual Headteacher for Children in Care is now statutory for every local authority. Virtual Headteachers will scrutinise, challenge and support schools with their teaching and learning for all Children in Care and assist each other in this task where children cross physical borders to live and attend education provision.

Role & responsibilities of the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team

- to promote a culture in which Children in Care believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out
- to appoint a Designated Teacher for CiC (LAC) and PCiC (PLAC)

(Designated Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team).

- to empower the Designated Teacher to fulfil their role and responsibilities
(This will include the provision of time to undertake the role; supporting training needs and providing opportunities for the cascade of training to all staff and AQC members in the school)
- to ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Children in Care and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them
(a young person's ability to engage in learning can be undermined by feelings of loss, rejection, confusion, insecurity and low self-esteem – being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives)
- to recognise the particular circumstances of CiC (LAC) and PCiC (PLAC), and provide for these in all other School Policies and the school's QIP (Quality Improvement Plan)
(For example, in Admission, Inclusion, Extended School and Visits, and Staffing and Partnership working. Behaviour Management is another area where prevention and measures may be the same as those for all other pupils, but sometimes those in Care may need additional support. It is particularly important to ensure any child at risk of exclusion is identified to the Virtual School)
- to ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for, individual children *(sufficient access of information should be in place to ensure staff who are in contact with the child are aware of their care status on a need to know basis, including staff cover where appropriate and day-to-day arrangements)*
- to show commitment to working with local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of Children in Care *(Hampshire's Virtual School can be contacted at any time, about any pupil to aid communications with other local authorities. The Hampshire VS website contains all contact details – see [Hampshire Virtual School for children in care | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/virtual-school) .*

Role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for CiC (LAC) and PCiC (PLAC)

- to have high expectations of Children in Care's involvement in learning and educational progress
- to monitor the educational progress of all Children in Care and Children Previously in Care, in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community
- to intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement or absence from school, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible (to carers, social workers and/or the Virtual School where appropriate)
- to act as an advocate for Children in Care and Children Previously in Care
- to inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Children in Care
- to promote the involvement of these children in out of school hours learning
- to be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority Children's Services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners
- to ensure every Child in Care has a current Personal Education Plan that includes appropriate educational targets and encourages the 'voice of the child' to be heard
- to attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings
- to provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate
- to present a termly update to the school's AQC
- to access statutory training events organised by Hampshire's Virtual School (as a minimum requirement)
- to cascade training to school staff and AQC members as appropriate

Our Designated Teachers for CiC (LAC) and PCiC (PLAC) at St Mark's Primary School are:

Sophie Culverhouse (SENCo)

Rachel Jones (DSL and Deputy Headteacher)

Roles and responsibilities of all staff

- to have high expectations of CiC (LAC) and PCiC's (PLAC's) learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress
- to be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment difficulties) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour
- to understand how important it is to see CiC and PCiC as individuals rather than as a group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about their situation/background
- where necessary, to appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported
- for PCiC, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

Role and responsibilities of the AQC

- to ensure the appointment of a Designated Teacher in accordance with the regulations
- to ensure the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- to monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of children in care
- to ensure all AQC members are fully aware of legal requirements and guidance on the education of children in care
- to monitor the effectiveness of the role. The AQC should receive an annual report (as a minimum) from the Designated Teacher
- to examine whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, such as additional funding, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for CiC to achieve at expected progress within a key stage.
- to scrutinise the school's admission procedures to ensure students are admitted into the school as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for children in care
- to champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated Teacher on a more regular basis.

The name of our AQC representative for CiC (LAC) at St Mark's Primary School is:

To be assigned when the AQC is formed from September 2025

The Headteacher and Designated Teachers will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the Policy.