

CHILDREN IN CARE POLICY

INCLUSIVE OF PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER POLICY

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Every Student a Graduate – Every Student a Leader

PRINCIPAL: MR JON ANGELL CEO: MR STEVE TAYLOR | THE CITY ACADEMY, RUSSELL TOWN AVENUE, REDFIELD, BS5 9JH
TEL: 0117 9413800 EMAIL: INFO@CITYACADEMY.BRISTOL.SCH.UK | WWW.CITYACADEMY.BRISTOL.SCH.UK

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2 Context

City Academy is a 950 place mixed gender academy situated in East Central Bristol. It serves an area of high deprivation and student admissions are mainly from the local community (Lawrence Hill, Barton Hill, Easton, St Pauls, St George and Whitehall). The student profile is multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith, of which 47.5% of students speak English as an additional language and 71% Students being of BME (Black Minority Ethnic). 18.2% of students have special educational needs, 34.7% are in receipt of free school meals and approximately 52% Pupil Premium.

3 Vision

City Academy is a vibrant, diverse and dynamic academy in the centre of Bristol, providing inclusive and accessible education, transforming future opportunities for young people, their families and the community.

In its central setting, City Academy makes a unique contribution to Bristol, building on the present CLF system leadership and commitment in securing excellent education across the city that improves lives and places, in line with the strategic aims of Bristol's Learning City. City Academy offers a contemporary, traditional curriculum that is both innovative and future proof. The curriculum design reflects our understanding of the diversity of the community and supports personalisation so that all learners are able to experience and achieve success that impacts positively on their futures, their families and the wider community. City Academy students develop multiple and transferable employability skills, which will enable sustainable futures and financial independence.

City Academy is ambitious and has sustainability, enterprise and employability at the core of all aspects of its design and delivery. The curriculum is designed and co-constructed to reflect the evolving needs of local and regional employers, higher education and businesses, providing an enabling and broad foundation for alumni to be and remain competitive in a national context.

The experience of students, parents and staff at City Academy is underpinned by a strong sense of equity and equality. We seek to remove any barrier to access, progress, participation, achievement and attainment. We will achieve this by providing a nurturing learning environment, where learning is encouraged both in and out of the academy via a range of structured and independent pursuits and aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationships.

The City Academy vision is built on the following values:

- **Pride**
- **Grit**
- **Team Spirit**

In line with the core purpose of the Cabot Learning Federation, the following core purpose will be at the **HEART** of all we do at City Academy:

- Establish **High Expectations** for all that we seek to achieve
- Create **Equity** of opportunity, removing disadvantage
- Champion the success and life chances of **All children**
- Furnish Pupils and Staff with the **Resilience** to succeed as lifelong learners
- Promote **Tolerance** and respect for ourselves, our communities and our environment

4 Rationale

At City Academy, we recognise that we have a key role to play in improving the life chances of our young people, and particularly in the case of our Children in Care and previously Looked after Child.

5 Definitions

The terms Looked after Child (LAC) and Child in Care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term CiC. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- (i) children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;*
- (ii) children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;*
- (iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;*
- (iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.*

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

Previously looked-after children are those who are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or who 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.

6 Linked Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the academy's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Additional Needs Policy, and the SEN Information Report.*

7 Our key aims are to:

- Provide a place where Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children* can learn, feel supported and included, and be themselves;
- Improve the educational attainment and achievement of all our Children in Care and give them the greatest chance of success, both here and in life beyond school;
- Equip our Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children* with the skills they will need to flourish in adult life.

In order to do this, we commit to:

- Having high expectations of Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children*;
- Giving our Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children* a sense of the control they have over their own lives;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, neglect, abuse and disruption;
- Supporting the needs of our Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children* as individuals, regardless of how challenging this may be at times.
- Listening to the views of our Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children* and ensuring that these are central to decision-making and are taken into account wherever appropriate and helpful to do so.
- Ensuring our teachers and support staff are aware of the specific needs of our Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children*.

8 Objectives

We will support Children in Care by:

- Ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll;
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge;
- Ensuring that each child has a high quality Personal Education Plan;
- Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;
- Developing strong relationships with carers, and agencies including the Virtual School and other specialist agencies where appropriate;
- Encouraging and supporting Children in Care to aim high and to take responsibility for their learning;
- Engaging Children in Care in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities;
- Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance;
- Giving integrated but low profile support in school for each Children in Care so that they are not made to feel different from other children;
- Planning for future transitions in liaison with outside agencies.

We will support Previously Looked-After Children by:

- *Ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll;*
- *Balancing support with real challenge;*
- *Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;*
- *Developing strong relationships with carers, and agencies including the Virtual School and other specialist agencies where appropriate;*
- *Encouraging and supporting Previously Looked-After Children to aim high and to take responsibility for their learning;*
- *Engaging Previously Looked-After Children in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities;*
- *Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance;*

- *Giving integrated but low profile support in school for each Previously Looked-After Child so that they are not made to feel different from other children;*
- *Planning for future transitions in liaison with outside agencies where appropriate.*

9 Roles and responsibilities

The Role of the Governing Body:

- There will be a Governor with special responsibility for Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children*;
- The governing body will ensure that the Designated Teacher and named governor undertake appropriate training;
- Governors will consider an annual report from the Designated Teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, CiC with Special Educational Needs or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of The HOPE (Bristol's Virtual School for Children in Care).
- The governing body, Principal and school leadership team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
 - The school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CiC *and Previously Looked-After Children* on roll;
 - The school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC *and Previously Looked-After Children*;
 - Resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CiC *and Previously Looked-After Children*;

The Role of the Principal:

- To ensure that, in partnership with the Governing body, the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children*;
- To make sure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children* to achieve;
- In partnership with the Governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher;
- Oversee the development of the policy on Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children*;
- Evaluate the standards and achievement of Children in Care *and Previously Looked-After Children*; and report these termly to the governing body and discuss them at Core SIO/HOPE meetings.
- Ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc. that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support children in care.

The role of the Designated Teacher within the school:

The Designated Teacher in this school is Aisha Thomas who holds the post of Assistant Principal for Inclusion.

The Designated Teacher has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the factors which affect how *CiC and Previously Looked-After Children* learn and achieve. The Designated Teacher will:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children* learn;
- Promote the educational achievement of every *Child in Care and Previously Looked-After Child* on the school's roll;
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put *Children in Care or Previously Looked-After Children* at a disadvantage;
- Make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children's* learning;
- Promote a culture in which *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children* are able to 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;
- Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children;
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of *CiC's* personal education plan (PEP) within the school;
- Set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children* and forward educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer;
- Have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the factors which can affect how *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children* learn and achieve.

The role of all those involved in supporting *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children*:

- Ensure that all *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children* are made to feel welcome and included;
- Have high expectations of *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children's* involvement in learning and educational progress;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a *Child in Care or Previously Looked-After Child's* behaviour, and why they may need more patience and support than other children;
- Understand how important it is to see *Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children* as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a *Child in Care or Previously Looked-After Child's* status;

- *For Children in Care*, understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

10 Admission/Induction Arrangements

Young people in care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the Academy or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the Academy's expectations and processes and the CiC will meet with the Designated Teacher for Children in Care. The Designated Teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the CiC is made to feel supported in our Academy. Consideration will be given to giving the CiC a peer mentor if this will support their progress.

On admission, records will be requested from the CiC's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the CiC, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When young people already on the Academy roll enter care the Academy will ensure that the CiC meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the Academy procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and an initial PEP meeting must be held within 28 days.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/Academy book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

11 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All Children in Care must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record.

The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping Children in Care to achieve and enjoy. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the young person, carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care.

The PEP should include challenging, curriculum-based targets and support the young person's educational progress. If the young person has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

12 Pupil Premium

All Children in Care in KS3 and KS4 are entitled to additional support to be funded by Pupil Premium. The aim of this support is to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. This support will most often include individual tuition in English and Maths.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible Children in Care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

For Children in Care, the appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

In the case of Previously Looked-After Children, Pupil Premium Plus funding is allocated directly to and managed by their school. Schools manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked after or previously looked after children and according to children's needs. It is not a personal budget for individual children; however, if there are specific and identified educational needs requiring additional support in school then the funding may be used for this purpose.

13 School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Given the delays that Children in Care experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

14 Leaving Arrangements

When a Child in Care or *Previously Looked-After Child* leaves the school we will aim to ensure a positive ending, and one which provides a reassuring model of life change. We will find ways to say goodbye. We will share information with future providers, via Social Workers where appropriate, and will continue to be available to share further information such as this may be required in future. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school or FE/HE institution if appropriate. Where possible, if a destination is known in advance, the future institution will be invited to the final PEP to confirm transition arrangements.

All Year 11 Young People in Care will be asked if they would like their preferred post-16 provider to be invited to their PEP as required by the LA guidance.

15 Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Principal, in which case the complaint will go straight to the Chair of Governors.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Principal's response.

16 Links with other Policies

Bristol policies and guidance

- [Admissions protocol and operational process](#)
- [Attendance plan for CiC example](#)
- [Exclusion Procedural Guidance](#)
- [Induction and leaving processes for children in care \(CiC\)](#)
- [Information sharing protocol for CiC and care leavers in FE](#)
- [Model confidential school file for CiC](#)
- [Monitoring and Tracking Pupil Progress](#)
- [Personal Education Plan Guidance](#)
- [Principles for administering Bursary funds for CiC/care leavers](#)
- [Process for agreeing part time timetable](#)
- [Process for new children in care/CiC moving](#)
- [Process for Year 11-12 transfer for CiC](#)
- [Pupil Premium briefing](#)
- [When a child comes into care \(pdf, 15 KB\) \(opens new window\) – Children in care Education Website](#)