

CHILDREN in CARE (CiC) & CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER (CPLA) POLICY

Reference this policy is aligned to with LCC	Virtual School Model Policy
Agreed with Support Staff Trade Unions	n/a
Adopted by the Governing Body	September 2024
Next Review Due	September 2025
Agreed with Teacher Trade Unions and Professional Associations	n/a

Welland Park Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Our Motto

Learning for Life

Our Mission Statement

Working together to provide the highest quality education for each student, through our commitment to continuous improvement.

Aims of the Academy

- To provide a safe, caring and structured environment where students feel valued and develop strategies to ensure they develop good physical and mental health and well-being.
- To provide high quality teaching and outstanding learning outcomes for all our students.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum in an atmosphere conducive to effective learning.
- To encourage students to work co-operatively, respecting each other, adults and their environment, to become confident, happy and successful individuals.
- To facilitate lifelong learning by providing opportunities and resources for community learning.
- To create an effective partnership with families, governors and the wider community.
- To establish professional working relationships and to facilitate the professional development of staff to achieve the school aims.
- To work within a framework of equal opportunities and to encourage an awareness and appreciation of cultural and religious diversity, in accordance with British Values (Welland Park Values).
- To challenge all students to achieve their potential and develop the academic, social and cultural skills to contribute to a modern society.

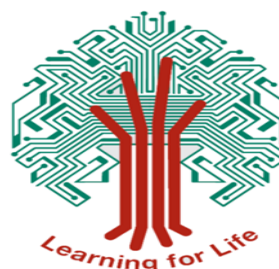
Our Values

In The Welland Park Family,

We Respect

Persevere

Achieve...with kindness



Rationale

Welland Park Academy (WPA) recognises that Children in Care (CiC) and Children Previously Looked After (CPLA) can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting. We are committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We recognise that CiC and CPLA may have faced significant trauma in the form of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) including abuse, neglect, loss and/or rejection. When children are exposed to these adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their learning, as well as on their ability to think and to interact with others.

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for CiC and previously CiC are of real concern. Students who are living in care often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, national progress and attainment data clearly shows that CiC and CPLA are at greater risk of exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Helping them succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Welland Park Academy believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every CiC and CPLA can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that CiC can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

School can be a source of stability for children who may have been subject to emotional distress and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and thrive. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage students to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development
- Seek to give our young people in care professional help, encouragement and support, so they find our school a welcoming and friendly place
- Ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation
- Plan support for CiC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life
- Help students develop their cultural, moral and social understanding
- Be fully inclusive and to challenge negative views and stereotypes

Policy (Legal framework)

Children in Care (CiC)

The term 'in care' has a specific, legal meaning, based on the Children Act 1989: a child is 'in care' of a local authority if they fall into one of the following:

- is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, [Children Act 1989, Section 20 and 21]
- is subject to a care order [Children Act 1989, Part IV]

- is subject to a placement order
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

Children Previously Looked After (CPLA)

CPLA children are those who:

- are no longer in care within 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
- 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.

Every local authority is required to appoint an officer to make sure that their duty to promote the educational achievement of CiC and CPLA is properly discharged; this officer is called the Virtual School Head (VSH). The duties of the VSH are defined in the DfE statutory guidance "*Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children*" – February 2018.

The governing body of a maintained school and the proprietor of an academy must ensure that an appropriately qualified and experienced member of staff, undertakes the responsibilities within the school to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school's roll; this person is the 'designated teacher' (DT). The duties of the DT are defined in the DfE statutory guidance "*The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children*" – February 2018.

Principles

Welland Park Academy is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of CiC and CPLA in the following ways:

- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of CiC and CPLA.
- Providing a climate of acceptance and challenging negative stereotypes.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education that meets the needs of the individual child.
- Ensuring that (CiC and CPLA) students have the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of the school, including the curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience.
- Ensuring CiC have a PEP that addresses all aspects of education including health and wellbeing and ensures that appropriate support is in place to promote progress.
- Ensuring that carers/parents, social workers and virtual school staff, (where relevant), are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensuring that (CiC and CPLA) students are involved, where practicable, in decisions about their education, including affecting their future provision.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.

- Ensuring an appropriately trained DT is appointed, who will be responsible for all CiC and CPLA.
- Prioritising a reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Ensuring discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensuring there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially regarding schoolwork on "family".

Procedures - admissions

Welland Park Academy welcomes all CiC.

All CIC and CPLA should have the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The school recognises that CIC and CPLA are an 'excepted group' and will be prioritised in our oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code 2021 (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Due to care placement changes, CIC children may enter the Academy mid-term. It is vital that these students are given a positive welcome. If necessary, they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help the student settle.

The PEP (personal education plan)

A PEP will be initiated within 20 school days of the CIC starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary (at least termly and within 6 months of the previous PEP). The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns, ensure appropriate support is in place and set SMART targets. The child should be involved in their PEP by attending the meeting and/or sharing their views or in another way (e.g. gathered by the DT before the meeting).

We will have robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are reflected in the PEP and addressed through the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) framework as soon as possible.

Pupil premium plus (PPP)

PPP for CIC will be delegated to schools by the relevant virtual school. We will allocate the Pupil Premium Plus funding (PPP) to support appropriate provision for individual CIC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and the child's PEP. We will work in partnership with the child's Virtual School to ensure that CIC receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve in all aspects of school life.

For CPLA, the PPP funding will go directly to the school's budget if the child is listed as CPLA on the October census. The use of this funding will be identified in consultation with the young person and their parents/carers.

Suspensions and exclusions

The school recognises that CIC and CPLA are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a CIC/CPLA is at risk of suspension or exclusion, the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. Consultation

with social workers, the Virtual School and other relevant parties will be important in identifying strategies to minimise the risk of suspension/exclusion.

If a suspension or exclusion is unavoidable, the reintegration meeting should consider all possible measures and resources that provide support and prevent further exclusions. The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any CiC.

Confidentiality

Many CiC do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel different. We will maintain and respect the child's confidentiality in consultation with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties. Once this has been agreed, complete confidentiality is to be maintained and information on CiC will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis. We will determine on a case by case basis when and with whom we will share detailed information regarding care status.

All staff will do their utmost to maintain the child's confidentiality e.g. avoiding reference to their care status/PEP meetings in front of their peers.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with CiC and CPLA, such as Social Care teams; virtual schools, Educational Psychology, health services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

Responsibilities

Governing Body

All governors should be fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CiC and CPLA.

The governing body will appoint a named governor for CiC and CPLA. The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Principal and Designated Teacher (DT) as the named staff responsible for implementing this policy.

The named Governor should:

- ensure the school has a coherent policy for CiC and CPLA that is regularly reviewed in light of the relevant statutory guidance and that other school policies support their needs
- ensure that the school has a DT, and that the DT has the necessary time, resources and training to be able to carry out his or her responsibilities
- ensure CiC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- allocate resources to meet the needs of CiC and CPLA

The governing body should receive an annual report setting out:

- The number of CIC and CPLA students on the school's roll
- Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other students
- Their progress and attainment, as a discrete group, compared to other students
- The number of fixed-term suspensions and permanent exclusions
- The destinations of CIC students who leave the school

The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the students concerned.

Principal

The responsibilities of the Principal are:

- To identify a DT for CIC and CPLA. NB it is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the DT leave the school or be absent.
- To support the DT in carrying out his/her role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on CIC.
- To ensure that the DT has received appropriate training and has the necessary time and resources to carry out the role.
- To ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of CIC and ensure strategies are in place to address any concerns in these areas.
- To report on the progress, attendance and behaviour of CIC to all parties involved.
- To ensure that all staff receive relevant training about the needs of CIC and CPLA and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- To ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used effectively to support appropriate provision for individual CIC.

Designated Teacher

Government Guidance says that the DT should be *"someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for CIC and CPLA, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy shares and supports high expectations for them."*

In this context the **Designated Teacher** will:

- Become the central point of contact at this school for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the individual looked after children we have on roll
- Take the lead role in the professional assessment and preparation of the educational targets and subsequent reviews to be recorded into the relevant sections of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP should be established within twenty school working days for any looked after child starting on roll. This to include the gradual addition and updating of further information over time e.g. attendance, attainment and progress results
- Be pro-active in supporting transition to a new school or phase of education
- Attend relevant update training and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding looked after children

- Ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account
- Establish good working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews
- Understand the role of social workers and other relevant parties, be the named contact for them and maintain regular communication with them
- Understand the role of virtual schools and respond promptly to requests for information
- Provide support and sanctuary to help settle a looked after child into the school, and at other times; ensure that the looked after child feels safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support
- Act as an advocate for CIC and CPLA in order to maintain high aspirations, allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how CIC and CPLA children learn and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- Ensure the transfer of records if a looked after child moves school
- Provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required
- Seek and prioritise meetings with, and referrals to, appropriate external agencies in situations that require external support
- Ensure that children are able to discuss their progress and are involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion
- Maintain an up-to-date record of the CIC in school, ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required on a strictly 'need to know' basis and reporting annually to governors, maintaining confidentiality of all CIC and CPLA
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage CIC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning
- Be aware that many CIC and CPLA say they are bullied, so actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy
- Operationally, CiC/CPLA children's cases will be handled between the Designated Teacher and the SENCO

At Welland Park Academy, the designated safeguarding lead is also the designated teacher for looked after children. This group is extremely vulnerable, the most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and the school is aware of the need to monitor the welfare and ensure the support of children in this category.

All Staff

We will require our school Teaching and Support Staff to assist in the implementation and support of this policy for Children in Care and Children Previously Looked After by requiring all staff to:

- Be aware of the impact of trauma (including abuse, neglect, loss and separation) on children's development and their ability to build relationships, and how this might affect their behaviour
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CIC and CPLA, as for all students and work to ensure they achieve stability and success at school
- Understand how important it is to see CIC and previously CIC children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their CIC or previously CIC status
- Use effective classroom strategies to meet the needs of CIC and CPLA and be aware that some curriculum content may trigger difficult emotions, such as schoolwork on "family"
- Keep the DT informed about CIC and CPLA children's progress, respond promptly to requests for information and discuss any concerns about barriers to learning (including bullying)
- Appreciate the central importance of the CIC child's 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
- Be familiar with, and respond appropriately to, requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews
- Ensure that no child in care becomes the victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and addressed
- Positively promote the self-esteem children in care
- Convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.

The name of our appointed Designated Governor is: Mrs H Russell, Staff Governor.

The name of our school's Designated Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs D Pendell, Assistant Principal.

Links to other policies

The needs of CIC and CPLA should be kept in mind in all other policies including:

- Pupil Premium Policy (Differentiation between Pupil Premium for FSM, Forces' children, CPLA, and CIC)
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy