



Barnett Wood Infant School

Children In Care (CiC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

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Policy Impact Statement and Updates

Policy:	Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children Policy
Date of review:	January 2026
Governor/s responsible:	Kelly Headen / Becky Clements
Status / date of next review:	Annual - January 2026
How well has the policy achieved its purpose and outcomes?	
<p>The Children in Care and PLAC Policy aims to create a supportive and inclusive educational environment that addresses the unique needs of these vulnerable groups. By focusing on educational attainment, emotional well-being, stability, and personal development, the policy seeks to ensure that looked after and previously looked after children have the best possible opportunities to succeed in their education and life beyond school.</p> <p>There are currently no children in the category of Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children at Barnett Wood.</p>	
Updates and/ or changes to policy:	
January 2026	<p>Added sections on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and wellbeing support • Enhanced monitoring and data use • Pupil voice and participation • Transition support • Staff training and development
January 2025	Added section 'Roles and Responsibilities of Staff' (p.6) to ensure a whole school approach.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils and or staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Barnett Wood Infant School

Children in Care (CiC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

Headteacher and designated teacher for children in care (CiC) and previously looked after children (PLAC): Anne Gibbard

Governor responsible for CiC and PLAC: Kelly Headen

This policy is based on the model policy from Surrey's Virtual School. The virtual school is responsible for raising the educational standards of Surrey's Children in Care. At Barnett Wood Infant School we would like to extend this policy to all children who have been in care at any point in their life whether returned to natural parents, guardians or adopted. It is important to remember that these children have experienced separation and/or trauma in their lives and need to be sensitively monitored and nurtured in order that they experience positive relationships and make at least expected progress.

CONTEXT

The terms 'Looked After Children' and 'Children in Care' are often used to define the same group of young people. In documents produced by Surrey's Virtual School the use of Children in Care (CiC) is the preferred term.

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 that 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 Adoption Order' is granted by the court.

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 Barnett Wood we will produce a plan for any child in care or previously in care which shows how we plan to ensure high personal and educational achievements. The plan will be shared with parents and will be fully resourced through additional funding targeted for these children. Meetings with parents will be at least once a year and more frequently if required. Children will also be encouraged to contribute to the plan as appropriate.

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.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADTEACHER AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- We will promote a culture in which children in care and those previously looked after believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out.
- We will appoint a Designated Teacher for CiC and previously looked after children.
(Designated Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team).
- We will 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 governors in the school).
- We will ensure, through training and induction, that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children in care and previously looked after children 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).
- We will recognise the particular circumstances of CiC and PLAC and provide for these in all appropriate other School Policies and when appropriate, the school's Development Plan.
- We will ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for individual children.
(Sufficient access 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 such as the collection of younger children from school and automated texting to carers from school information systems).
- We will ensure extra vigilance if there are any security issues with the child, and make the relevant staff aware of the increased alertness required especially around the school boundary and exits and when dismissing children from classrooms.
- We will ensure we follow guidance from adoptive parents regarding any school publicity photos.

- We are committed to working with local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of children in care and previously looked after (*Surrey's Virtual School can be contacted at any time, about any pupil to aid communications with other local authorities. The Surrey VS website contains all contact details – see www.surreyvirtualschool.org.uk*).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CiC and PLAC

- To have high expectations of CiC and PLAC's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all CiC and PLAC 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, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- To act as an advocate for CiC and PLAC.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of CiC and PLAC.
- 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 appropriate support that includes 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 an Annual Report in the Autumn Term or as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors.
- To access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School.
- To cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- Governors will ensure the appointment of a Designated Teacher in accordance with the Regulations (*Designated Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team*).
- Governors will ensure the designated teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- Governors will monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC and PLAC.
- Governors will monitor the effectiveness of the role, governing bodies should receive an annual report (as part of the Headteacher's report) from the Designated Teacher.
- Governors will 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 and PLACs to achieve at least the expected progress within a key stage.
- Governors will 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 CiC or PLAC.
- Governors will champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated Teacher on a more regular basis. The governing body will choose to identify a nominated Governor for CiC and PLAC.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STAFF

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

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

Barnett Wood Infant School recognises the critical importance of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of CiC and PLAC. The school will work closely with mental health professionals and external agencies to provide timely emotional and psychological support tailored to individual needs. Staff will receive training on trauma-informed approaches to better support pupils who have experienced separation or trauma.

ENHANCED MONITORING AND DATA USE

The Designated Teacher will implement a structured monitoring framework using data analytics to track educational progress and wellbeing indicators for CiC and PLAC. Progress and challenges will be reviewed at least termly to enable early intervention and targeted support. Annual reporting to governors will be supplemented by termly updates to senior leadership.

PUPIL VOICE AND PARTICIPATION

The school will actively involve CiC and PLAC in the creation and review of their Personal Education Plans (PEPs). Opportunities will be provided for pupils to express their views and participate in decisions affecting their education and wellbeing. Consideration will be given to establishing a pupil forum or feedback group specifically for CiC and PLAC to enhance engagement.

TRANSITION SUPPORT

Transition support will be expanded to cover all key educational transitions, including moves between schools or placements. The Designated Teacher will liaise with receiving schools to ensure smooth handovers and continuity of care and education. A formal transition plan will be developed for each CiC and PLAC pupil as appropriate.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

All staff will receive updated training on trauma-informed practice and attachment-aware approaches as part of their ongoing professional development. New staff will receive induction training on CiC and PLAC needs and the school's policy. Refresher training will be scheduled regularly to maintain awareness and effectiveness.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Next review Date: January 2027