



Staplehurst School

Children in Care Policy

Date

Policy approved at a meeting of the Full Governing Body

14 July 2026

Policy to be next reviewed

October 2027

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Children in Care¹ policy

Introduction

Staplehurst School recognises that nationally, Children in Care (CIC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that CIC are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing, in line with current safeguarding guidance and the school's duty to promote the educational outcomes of Children in Care (Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)).

The school also recognises its statutory responsibility to support Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), defined as children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements orders. The Designated Teacher will promote their educational achievement and provide appropriate advice and support to staff, recognising that these children may face similar challenges to those currently in care.

Helping CIC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Kent County Council and Kent schools. This policy takes account of:

- The County Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of CIC (LAC).
- The Education (Admission of CIC) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies.

Principles

Our approach at Staplehurst to supporting the educational achievement of CIC, is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Early intervention and priority action.
- Listening to children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

Implications

As for all our pupils, Staplehurst School is committed to helping every CIC to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

The Governing Body of Staplehurst School is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- ensure a Designated Teacher for CIC is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- ensure a statutory Personal Education Plan (PEP) is put in place, implemented and reviewed regularly (at least termly) for every Child in Care, in line with Kent guidance. Previously Looked After Children do not require a Personal Education Plan; however, the school will ensure appropriate support is in place to meet their individual needs, and the Designated Teacher will provide advice to staff to promote their educational achievement.

¹ May also be referred to as LAC (Looked After Children) and CLA (CIC)



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- identify a governor as Designated Governor for CIC.

Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children are given highest priority within the school's admissions arrangements in accordance with national regulations.

The school will work in partnership with the Virtual School Head (VSH), who has a statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care. The Designated Teacher will liaise with the Virtual School to support the child's progress and ensure effective use of Pupil Premium Plus.

Pupil Premium

The Department for Education provides schools additional funding for pupils who are looked after by a Local Authority. This additional funding (Pupil Premium Plus) is used to improve educational outcomes for Children in Care. Its use will be clearly linked to the targets identified in the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) and its impact will be monitored by the Designated Teacher and Governing Body.

Links with Other Policies

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of CIC when reviewing them:

- Safeguarding Policy (including Child Protection and Designated Teacher)
- Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy & Action Plan
- Special Educational Needs Policy

The school will champion the needs of CIC, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Roles & Responsibilities

Responsibility of the Headteacher:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for CIC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission; progress, attendance and any exclusion of CIC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of CIC.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

The Governing body through its Learning & Development Committee will:

- Identify a nominated Governor for CIC - the nominated governor is the Vulnerable Groups Governor shown on the cover page of the policy.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of CIC.
- Allocate resources (including Pupil Premium) to meet the needs of CIC
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Monitor the academic progress of CIC, through an annual report at the L&D Committee (see below).
- Review the Pupil Premium expenditure and monitor impact at least annually, with review published on the School's website



- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure CIC achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of CIC are recognised and met.
- Receive vulnerable groups report once a year setting out:
 - The number of CIC pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
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 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

Responsibility of the Link Governor

- Ensure that all Governors are advised of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CIC.

Responsibility of the Designated Teacher:

- Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen...[who] should be an advocate for CIC, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them."
- Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for CIC. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training and support is provided by Virtual School Kent (VSK). Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on CIC, monitoring how the School has promoted their inclusion and attainment, the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them as well as how the school has spent their Pupil Premium.
- The Designated Teacher also has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), providing advice to staff and supporting their individual needs as appropriate.

The School's Designated Teacher is the Inclusion Manager shown on the cover page of the policy. The Inclusion Manager will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least one week before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each CIC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. *Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.*
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the CIC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage CIC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning and promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of CIC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.



- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware Children in Care may be at increased risk of bullying, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.

Responsibility of the of all Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CIC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain CIC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable CIC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all CIC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of CIC.
- Children in Care may be at increased risk of bullying, and staff will be vigilant in preventing and addressing this in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Monitoring & Reviewing

All school staff and governors will have access to a copy of this policy and will have the opportunity to consider significant changes to its contents, prior to the approval of the Governing Body being formally sought. This policy will be formally reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.