CROFTY EDUCATION TRUST



Children in Care and Previously in Care Policy

School Policy for the Education of Children in Care (CiC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) & Children with a Social Worker

Audience:	School and academy staff, Local Governing Bodies
Reviewed: **Approved:** **Effective From:**	DoE and Safeguarding Lead September 2026 Board 14 October 2026 15 October 2026
Other related policies / procedures	• Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy • Equality Policy • Anti-Bullying Policy • Positive Behaviour Management Policy • E-Safety Policy • PREVENT Strategy & Duty Guidance HM Gov • Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE • Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy • Working Together to Safeguard Children
Owner	Crofty Safeguarding Lead
Policy / procedure model	Trust policy: all Crofty schools use this policy Aligned: Policy to be adapted to school where indicated School policy: specific to needs of the school
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Summary of Changes

Date	Summary of Changes	Version Updated	New Version Number
21/9/26	Paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 added Paragraph 3.7 added Paragraph 5.8 last sentence added Paragraph 6.4 last sentence added Paragraph 9.4 added Section 13 added.	2025-26 V1	2026-27 V1

1. Purpose

1.1 At Crofty we believe that all Children in Care, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve in line or better than all children from Cornwall and children nationally. We, as a school community, aim to be champions and advocates for these children, and will take a proactive approach to support their success and achievement, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development and enhancing life outcomes.
1.2 The school recognises that children living in kinship care arrangements may face similar educational barriers and will work alongside parents, carers, virtual schools and other agencies to promote positive outcomes.
1.3 The school recognises that children who currently have, or have previously had, a social worker may experience barriers to education. The school will work collaboratively with the Virtual School and other agencies to promote educational achievement and positive wellbeing outcomes.

1.4 Designated teacher (DT) for CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker:: Helen Neil

1.5 Second contact if DT unavailable: Claire O'Brien

1.6 School staff and Governors are aware of the 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children', Feb 2018 DfE & Extended Duties for Children with a Social Worker (Guidance for Las and virtual school heads)
1.7 Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under Section 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989. Virtual School Heads also have responsibilities in relation to previously looked after children and strategic responsibilities regarding children with a social worker.
1.8 There is a Trust Safeguarding Leader to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its vulnerable learners.
1.9 Take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of these children attending their school.
1.10 Designated teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Head Teacher. The Designated Teacher must be a qualified teacher, headteacher or acting headteacher.

2 Our aims to support Children in Care, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker

2.4 Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
2.5 Close the gap - bring the educational attainments of our vulnerable children in line or better to those of their peers.
2.6 Ensure appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus* (see below for more information*) to support education.
2.7 Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age, ability and emotional understanding. This includes access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum.
2.8 Have appointed a suitable Designated Teacher for CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker.
2.9 Improving educational life chances for vulnerable children by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures, both within the school and with other agencies.

3 Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

3.1 Once a child leaves local authority care, a child is no longer looked after. However, their educational, social and emotional needs will not instantly change. Previously looked after children keep the educational entitlements they had while in care. This is the case for children who leave care through:

- 3.4.1 Adoption
- 3.4.2 special guardianship (SGO)
- 3.4.3 child arrangements order (CAO)

3.5 Educational entitlements include priority admission and Pupil Premium Plus. Schools and local authorities have a duty to promote the educational achievement of children who have left care.

3.6 Holding a PEP for a previously looked after child is not a statutory requirement. Crofty schools choose to complete one as a tool to maintain positive communication with home, track and monitor strategies and interventions and make best use of funding

3.7 Children in Kinship Care The school recognises that children in kinship care arrangements may face challenges similar to those experienced by children in care. The school will work with parents, carers, Virtual Schools and other professionals to support attendance, achievement, wellbeing and successful transitions.

4 Role of a Designated Teacher (DT)

4.4 The designated teacher is a central point of initial contact within the school. They have the overall responsibility to ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children aren't placed at a disadvantage and are given the support that they need to succeed both academically and emotionally in school.

4.5 Designated teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This involves, working with Virtual Schools Head (VSH) to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

4.6 Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
This means making sure that all staff:

- 4.6.1 have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- 4.6.2 are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation 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;
- 4.6.3 understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after 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 looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- 4.6.4 appreciate the central importance of the looked-after 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;

4.6.5 have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and

4.6.6 for previously looked-after children, 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.

4.6.7 Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:

- do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
- there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
- there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
- particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
- thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
- when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+;
- there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings).

4.7 Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children;

4.7.1 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;

4.7.2 are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;

4.7.3 are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;

4.7.4 believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and

4.7.5 can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.

4.8 Being a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.

4.9 Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:

4.9.1 promote good home-school links; o support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;

4.9.2 ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;

4.9.3 ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and

4.9.4 encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.

4.10 Having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked after children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary;

4.11 Working closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.

4.12 When supporting previously looked-after children, designated teachers should be aware that the VSH must provide information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of these children - this may be general information, including training opportunities, or information and advice on individual children at the request of their parents or designated teacher.

4.13 The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, including any requests to the VSH for advice on meeting their individual needs.

4.14 The head teacher or designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

5 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

5.4 We use the Cornwall LA Virtual School electronic, web-based PEP System with Welfare Call.

5.5 The ePEP system is a secure website and only people authorised by Cornwall Virtual School can use it. The system is available 24/7 on any device.

5.6 Each section of the PEP is colour coded to identify who should complete them. After the meeting, the PEP is quality assessed by a senior member of the Virtual School.

5.7 This system has capacity to hold information and generate reports, allowing schools and the Virtual School to share information about the education and interventions in place for children in care. It is also via this process that schools can access pupil premium plus to support their children.

5.8 CIC have access to Pupil Premium Plus. This is allocated to every child from day one of being in care by the Virtual School head, paid in termly . PLAC have access to Pupil Premium Plus by declaring their status in each October Census. The school will utilise Pupil Premium Plus funding in accordance with annually published DfE rates.

6 Leadership and Governance

6.4 We are part of Crofty Education Trust. Under our scheme of delegation Trustees have delegated the following responsibilities to the headteacher of each school. Our Trust Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for monitoring adherence to this and reporting any concerns to the Chair of the Trust School Improvement and Governance Committee. Trustees will receive anonymised reports regarding the educational outcomes, attendance, exclusions and progress of Children in Care, Previously Looked After Children and Children with a Social Worker.

6.5 **Headteacher** responsibilities:

6.5.1 Ensure the designated teacher has appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

6.5.2 Ensure the designated teacher has training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge

and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including a good knowledge of SEN.

6.5.3 Ensure the designated teacher accesses support from the Crofty Safeguarding network and Inclusion team.

6.5.4 Monitor the work of the designated teacher to ensure appropriate support is provided for looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school roll.

7 Special Educational needs *(see Cornwall SEND graduated response document)*

7.4 Any special educational needs are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made – early identification and action is key.

7.5 Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when CIC, PLAC and Children with a Social Worker are underachieving and or not thriving at school and have early interventions to improve and support the child.

7.6 Contact needs to be made with the Virtual School as soon as concerns are raised.

7.7 If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need or EHC Plan, then ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly Statutory Care Reviews / termly PEP meetings; dates can be obtained from the social worker. Please refer to SEN Code of Practice for further information.

7.8 The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments where required to support vulnerable learners.

8 Admissions and transitions

8.4 CIC and PLAC have priority on school admission. We admit students as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for CIC and PLAC.

8.5 We ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset and forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known. Every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

9 Attendance

9.4 Attendance will be monitored in line with the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance and attendance concerns will be addressed through an early-help and safeguarding approach where appropriate.

9.5 Attendance concerns involving Children in Care, Previously Looked After Children and Children with a Social Worker will be treated as safeguarding concerns and addressed through early intervention and multi-agency working where appropriate.

9.6 Attendance of Children in Care is closely monitored by the Virtual schools. We send a weekly attendance report to the Virtual School and contact the relevant people with any concerns.

9.7 The Virtual school will be notified by midday on the first day of absence where this is unauthorised for any child in care.

9.8 If a child is on a protection plan, the Social worker and Carer are contacted if child is absent from school.

9.9 Safety plans will be put in place where a CiC/ PLAC / Child with a Social Worker is on a reduced timetable.

10 Suspension

10.4 Where a child in care, previously looked after child or Child with a Social Worker is at risk of suspension we contact Awena- Virtual School Education Welfare Officer, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the learner missing days from school.

10.5 We ensure in the case of a suspension that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the suspension, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the suspended pupil to continue their education.

10.6 In the event of a suspension or permanent exclusion of a Child in Care, contact is made with the Virtual School with details of the suspension outlining the reasons why the child has been suspended so that an appropriate response can be made.

11 Multi-agency liaison

11.4 We are committed to maintaining effective professional dialogue and information sharing. The Designated Teacher will liaise closely with carers, birth parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues including homework, kit and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared.

11.5 In addition we will support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making.

12 At risk

12.4 We will share information with appropriate professionals if they feel a CiC, PLAC and Child with a Social Worker is at risk in any way.

12.5 Where a risk of absconding, going missing or exploitation has been identified we will work with carers and other agencies to put a safety plan in place.

13 Data Protection Statement

13.1 Information relating to a child's care status, social worker involvement or previous care status will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis in accordance with UK GDPR, Data Protection legislation and safeguarding requirements.

Appendix 1.

Designated Teacher's Guide to completing a Personal Education Plan

Overview

Every Child in Care between the ages of 3 & 18 must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) whether they are in; Early Years, Education, Training, Employment or NEET.

It is a **Statutory Requirement** that a PEP meeting should take place within 10 school days of the child coming into care or if there has been a significant change in their life e.g. change of School, Carer or Social Worker. Subsequently a PEP will then need to take place each term.

In order to be valid, the meeting must be held between the Designated Teacher, Social Worker, Carer and when appropriate the child. The child should be encouraged to take part in the PEP meeting as it is their meeting and their views about their education **must** be taken into consideration.
Cornwall Virtual School uses an electronic PEP (ePEP) system called Welfare Call.

http://extranet.welfarecall.com/

Please note you will not have access to the Welfare Call system until you have a CiC attending your establishment. It is the DT role to complete the PEP for education.

The PEP must be completed in a manner that supports requests made by the school to support a child in their learning and also backs up requests for additional funding.

By reading a child's PEP you should be able to know the child.

There is an expectation that the ePEP is fully completed on the Welfare Call system within 10 working days of the PEP meeting having taken place.

There is an expectation that the ePEP is fully completed on the Welfare Call system and where possible submitted on the day of the meeting. 10 working days maximum is given if there is an exceptional circumstance of the ePEP not being able to be finalised.

Collate the data and information beforehand for;

- **The views of the Child** – This should be the first document you complete
- **Attendance & Exclusion information**
- **Attainment** (Secondary schools it is advisable to email teachers a week in advance to get their report on engagement and wellbeing, progress and achievements)
- **Engagement & Wellbeing**
- **Compile a list/obtain up to date reports from who is involved with the child class/subject Teachers, CAMHS, Ed Psych etc**

Upon completion the Virtual School will Quality Assure (QA) the PEP. You will receive an email, and you can access the notes section through Welfare Call to view your grading and suggestions or issues. You will also be informed if your additional funding request has been approved. Once approved your additional PPP payment should be received by your school within 10 working days of receiving your grading.

A child is the responsibility of Cornwall Local Authority and therefore Cornwall Virtual School, if at the time they came into care (Accommodated), they were a resident of
Cornwall.

DTs are required to participate in appropriate termly DT Forums, or induction and joint agency training with The Virtual School – there is a requirement to attend to comply with your annual safeguarding return (the S175/157).

If there are safeguarding concerns for a CiC, PLAC or Child with a Social Worker, contact and advice should be sought from The Virtual School and MARU (Multi-agency referral unit) as per safeguarding procedures.