Children in Care Policy

Responsible for policy:	**CC3: Quality Provision and Performance**
Review:	**Biennial**
Chair of Directors	

Contents

Definitions

In this **Children in Care Policy**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

i   '**The Romero Catholic Academy**' means the Company named at the beginning of this **Children in Care Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi**, **Good Shepherd**, **Sacred Heart**, **SS Peter and Paul**, **St Gregory**, **St John Fisher**, **St Patrick**, **Cardinal Wiseman**, **Shared Services Team**.

ii   '**Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.

iii   '**Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.

iv   '**Chair'** means the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.

v   '**Governance Professional'** means the Governance Professional to the Board or the Governance Professional to the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.

vi   '**Chief Education Officer (CEO)'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.

vii   '**Diocesan Schools Commission**' means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.

viii   '**Local Governing Body**' means the governing body of the School.

ix   '**Governing body Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Governing Body of the School, from time to time.

x   '**Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.

xi   '**School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.

xii   '**Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)

xiii   '**Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body elected from time to time.

xiv   '**Children in Care (CiC) –** specific legal meaning, based on Children Act 1989: a child is 'looked after by a Local Authority if they: are provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, are subject to a care order or are subject to a placement order.

xv   **Previously looked after children (PLAC) –** these children are no longer CIC by a Local Authority in England & Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or they were adopted from 'state care' outside England & Wales.

xvi   **Personal Education Plans (PEP) –** Every CIC on roll must have a PEP within the statutory care planning framework. This is part of a looked-after child's care plan and needs to be developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure a looked-after child reaches their full potential.

xvii   **Virtual School Head –** these are officers appointed by the LA. They work strategically across the authority and with schools to monitor and support the educational achievement of looked-after children as if they were in a single school.

xviii   '**Pupils'** means Children (EYFS), Pupils (KS1-KS4), Students (KS5). For the purposes of the policy, we will use children throughout due to national guidance and statutory policies.

1. Scope

This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with:

- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children)
  Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Coventry Virtual School guide for designated teachers
  Virtual School – Coventry City Council
- Coventry Virtual School PEP Policy
  Coventry Virtual School - guidance and support – Coventry City Council

The policy also considers the following legislation:

- Children's Act 1989
- Children & Young Persons Act 2008
- Children & Families Act 2014
- Children & Social Work Act 2017
- The Designated Teacher for CIC & PLAC (February 2018)
- KCSIE

2. Introduction

At The Romero Catholic Academy we will create an environment where Children in Care (CIC) and children previously looked after (PLAC) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the '*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018.*

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for CIC and PLAC children in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CIC/PLAC children experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise.

Our school community aims to champion the needs of CIC / PLAC to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care.

3. Legal Framework

Children in Care (CIC) & Previously Children Looked After (PLAC)

The term 'looked after' has a specific, legal meaning, based on the Children Act 1989: a child is 'looked after' by 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

Previously LAC children (PLAC)

PLAC children are those who:

- are no longer CIC 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
- 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 PLAC 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 Children in Care 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.

4. Principles

The Romero Catholic Academy is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of CIC and PLAC in the following ways:

- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of CIC and PLAC.
- 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 PLAC) 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 PLAC) 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 PLAC.
- 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 pupils who are looked after, especially regarding schoolwork on "family."

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Local Governing Body

All Local Governing Body representatives should be fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CIC and PLAC.

The Local Governing Body representatives will appoint a named representative for CIC and PLAC. The named CIC representative will work in co-operation with the Principal and DT as the named staff responsible for implementing this policy.

The named Local Governing Body representatives should:

- ensure the school has a coherent policy for CIC and PLAC 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 PLAC

The Local Governing Body representatives should receive an annual report setting ut:

- The number of CIC and PLAC students on the school's roll.
- Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
- Their progress and attainment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions.
- The destinations of CIC pupils 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 pupils concerned.

Principal

The responsibilities of the Principal are:

- To identify a Designated Teacher for CIC and PLAC. 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 PLAC and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- To ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used effectively to support appropriate provision for individual CIC and Pupil Premium funding is used for PLAC (where appropriate).

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 PLAC, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the schools Children in Care Policy shares and supports high expectations for them.*"

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Understand the role of carers, 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.
- Act as an advocate for CIC and PLAC in order to maintain high aspirations, allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the PEP to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition to a new school or phase of education and ensure the speedy transfer of information.
- Be responsible for the implementation of the child's PEP and lead in promoting their educational achievement. This includes monitoring academic progress and attendance, and ensuring the necessary support is in place to meet the child's learning, social and emotional needs. This may involve working closely with other key members of staff e.g. the SENCO/Learning Mentor/Pastoral Teams.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how CIC and PLAC children learn and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- Ensure that each CIC and PLAC has an identified key adult that they can talk to at school.
- Ensure that children can 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 PLAC.
- 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 PLAC say they are bullied, so actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Attend training as required and keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding CIC.

All Staff

All staff should:

- 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 PLAC, as for all students and work to ensure they achieve stability and success at school.

Children in Care Policy   **Updated November 2025**

- 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 PLAC and be aware that some curriculum content may trigger difficult emotions, such as schoolwork on "family".
- Keep the DT informed about CIC and previously CIC 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.
- Engage with relevant training that is offered to enable them to work effectively with CIC and PLAC.

6. Procedures

Admissions:

The Romero Catholic Academy welcomes all CIC & PLAC.

All CIC and PLAC have the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The school recognises that CIC and PLAC are an 'excepted group' and are prioritised in our oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Children Looked After (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.

School procedures to support CIC during admission and transition include:
- prioritising CIC and PLAC at the point of admission
- record the date of application and date of admission and monitor timescale
- the swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support and Planning for CIC and PLAC at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss
- record the reason for exit and include in the report to the Local Governing Body

Attendance:

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of CIC and PLAC to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention, as outlined in the attendance policy.

Additional Educational Needs:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CIC and PLAC with additional educational needs by:
- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria *(in line with the DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018).*
- ensuring that Planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the Plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight *(in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09)*
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress each academic year.

Special Educational Needs & Disability:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CIC who have special educational needs by:
- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year
- ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision *(in line with the SEN Code of Practice)*
- ensuring that all Plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the Plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CIC by: familiarising themselves with the '*School Policy Guidance for Children in Care*' and following the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and the '*DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education,*' if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Exclusions:
We have reviewed the Schools Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy in line with the statutory guidance published in February 2018 (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018)***.** We will make every effort to avoid excluding a CIC, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Coordinator from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of CIC and PLAC. CIC and PLAC with special educational needs should have exclusion as a behaviour management action as a last possible resort (*Regulation 4(1)(c) of the Equalities Act 2010 which means that a head teacher could only lawfully exclude a child for a reason relating to their disability, even a disability that results in the child having a tendency to physical abuse, if reasonable adjustments have been made*).

Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will make every effort to engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CIC and PLAC. 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 PLAC, such as Social Care teams; virtual schools, Educational Psychology, health services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

The PEP (Personal Education Plan)

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) forms an essential part of each child's care plan and forms part of the child's official school record. 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).

The Romero Catholic Academy 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.

The Romero Catholic Academy and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for ensuring the PEP is a living and useful document. The PEP is a vital document because it provides a collective memory about a child's education and, when used effectively, improves the educational experience of the child by helping everyone gain a clear understanding of the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet the child's educational needs; this is especially important at any transition points.

PEP meetings are attended by:

- Child/Young Person
- Social Worker
- Designated Teacher for Children in Care at the school
- Parent/Foster Carer
- Any other professional that the social worker deems necessary (such as Educational Psychologist, Advisory Teacher, Therapist (art, play, sand)
- A Virtual School representative may also be in attendance.

Virtual School Head (VSH)

Since 2014 all local authorities are required to appoint an officer to discharge the duty placed on every local authority under the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of the children it looks after as if they were in a single school.

The VSH role is about raising attainment and ensuring progression of all looked-after children from that authority. They work strategically across the authority and with schools to monitor and support the educational achievement of looked-after children as if they were in a single school.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 extend the role the VSH to include providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked after children.

Virtual schools

Most local authorities have adopted a virtual school model to support the VSH's role. The VSH and the virtual school will be a very important partner for the designated teacher and will provide an invaluable source of support and advice to designated teachers both about individual children and the education of looked-after children more generally. Virtual schools may be able to:

- provide information on specialist services.
- help identify resources to support specific activities.
- co-ordinate support that may be required beyond that which is already provided by educational services.
- provide training for designated teachers on aspects of social care.

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 PLAC, the PP funding will go directly to the school's budget if the child is listed as PLAC on the January census.
The use of this funding will be identified in consultation with the young person and their parents.

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.
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.
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7. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this policy to the Governing Body of each school.
This policy will be reviewed by CC3 Quality Provision, Performance and Standards.

8. Links to other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:
- Romero Child Charter
- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Premium Statement (Differentiation between Pupil Premium for FSM, Forces' children, PLAC, and CIC)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Single Equality Duty
- Supporting Children with Medications
- Supporting Children with Mental Health

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

School:	
Date:	
Completed by:	
Designated Teacher for children in care and previously looked after children	

1- Basic Information and Workload

School years: Primary	N	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
School years: Secondary	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
Numbers of children who children in care									
Numbers of children who are previously looked after:									

Number of CIC entering the school during the academic year	
Number of CIC leaving the school during the academic year	
Number of CIC with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	
Number of children who have been children in care for more than a year	
Number of children who have been children in care for less than a year	

Does your school have a policy relating to children in care and previously looked after children	Yes/ No
If not, when will this be in place?	N/A
If yes when was the policy last reviewed date:	

What are the challenges relating to the role of the Designated Teacher for children in care and previously looked after children?	
Suggested actions for the Leadership Team and the Governing Body	

2 – Achievement and Progress of Children in Care

Are Children in Care in your school achieving in line with their peers? If not, please give examples of how you are closing the gap. Is the progress of looked after children monitored as a discrete group, what does the data show? How do you promote high aspiration to ensure they achieve in line with their peers, according to their ability?	
Suggested actions for the Leadership Team and the Governing Body	

3 - Attendance and Exclusion

Overall % attendance of children in care	
Number of children in care missing 15% or more sessions	
Suspensions total number of sessions	
How does this pattern of attendance and suspension compare to that of all children in your school?	
Suggested actions for the Leadership Team and the Governing Body	

4 - Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Number of PEP meetings completed:	
Are Governor reviews of PEPs routinely undertaken?	
Are relevant staff included in the implementation of the PEP?	

Please record any issues in the process or planning of personal education plans (PEPs)	
Suggested actions for the Leadership Team and the Governing Body	

5 - Planning, Intervention and Resources

Are the teaching, learning and inclusion needs of children in care reflected in school development plans and policies?

How is the school meeting these needs?	
How is the pupil premium plus spent/ Please provide examples?	
Suggested actions for the Leadership Team and the Governing Body	

6 – Training

List any training accessed by the Designated Teacher	
List any training accessed by Governors	
List any training disseminated to all School Staff and Governing Body	

Children in Care Policy   **Updated November 2025**