



SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN CARE POLICY

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Department:	Student Services		
Policy Version Number:	2.0		
Ratified by:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Governor Committee (please specify): Ethos, Safeguarding Welfare Committee Principalship	
Date Approved:	7.2.2024		
Policy valid for:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 year
Next review date:	7.2.2027		
Policy type:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A new policy Based on a previous version of the same policy	
Specific groups to whom this policy directly applies:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Students Governors Senior Post Holders Workers (including Casuals, Agency, Contractors etc.) Other (Please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.	
People/Groups consulted:	Click or tap here to enter text.		
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VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date revised	Author/reviewer	Section / page no. changed	Summary of change(s)
2.0	05/12/23	AMZ/SML/LAB	Whole policy reviewed	Inserted introduction and purpose and scope replaces aims and objectives
				Definitions updated
				Duties and responsibilities updated
				Reference to PEP added
				Staff awareness and training
				Complaints section added

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				Equality Impact Statement added
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1. Introduction

We are committed to supporting Children in Care to access education and extra-curricular activities, regardless of context.

Young people who are in the care of the Local Authority have the same rights as all young people, but may have additional needs due to attachment issues, early neglect, separation and loss, trauma and many placement moves. These barriers to learning can affect their educational outcomes and their personal, social and emotional development. This policy is designed to support the educational achievement, welfare and progression of Children in Care who attend our college.

2. Purpose and scope

This policy outlines how we will seek to identify, raise awareness of and offer support to any student who is in care. It seeks to provide a framework to:

- Improve the transition process for young people in care moving from school to the College.
- Ensure we develop appropriate academic and pastoral support for young people in care and care leavers, based on their expressed needs.
- Ensure we have effective processes for identifying students who are in, or have left, care, and for tracking their progress, maintaining confidentiality where requested.
- Identify any gaps relating to the attendance, success, retention or achievement of young people in care and care leavers compared to their peers, and to put in place measures to address them.
- Raise the aspirations of young people in care and care leavers and support them with effective information, advice and guidance to achieve their intended destination.
- Ensure that young people in care and care leavers have adequate financial support (e.g. Bursary Funding) and help with budgeting and financial management.
- Ensure that young people in care and care leavers have a say in the decisions that affect them and are involved in the various student voice processes.
- Ensure that staff are adequately trained, and are aware of the needs of young people in care and care leavers, and are sensitive to their circumstances.
- Challenge any stereotyping or discrimination that young people in care or care leavers may face.
- Develop effective partnership working both with the parent(s)/carer(s) of the young people and any agencies involved with them.

This policy applies to the whole college community.

3. Using this policy

The Education Inspection Framework recognises the need for schools and colleges to track particular cohorts of 'vulnerable learners' and to ensure there are no significant gaps in their educational outcomes, and that they receive the support they require to be successful.

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The 16 - 19 age is a time when young people in care and care leavers are particularly vulnerable, as many will be moving out of care into independent living arrangements, re-establishing contact with birth families, transferring to different social workers or teams, and it is a time when they need particular support.

Young people in care and care leavers are also more likely than their peers to exhibit social, emotional and mental health difficulties and it is important that the College understand the causes of this, and are able to bring in the appropriate support.

Although a small cohort in the College, young people in care and care leavers have been identified nationally and locally as a group needing particular attention. They are also less likely than their peers to enter post-16 education and are more likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training).

We believe that all young people have the right to an education, regardless of what is happening at home. This Policy says how we will support any student who is in care.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of applying the provisions contained in this policy, the following definitions will apply:

Term / acronym	Definition
Children in Care / Looked After Children	The terms Looked after Child (LAC) and Child in Care (CiC) are interchangeable. A child is looked after by a Local Authority if he/she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Authority.
Designated Lead	Is a nominated colleague who has responsibility for helping staff understand the barriers and effective strategies which affect how Children in Care learn and achieve.
Personal Education Plan (PEP)	A PEP is part of a young person's care plan. It's a record of the child's views and a plan of how everyone is supporting their education to ensure they achieve the best outcomes. A PEP includes information such as: how the young person thinks and feels about education; the young person's educational progress; how to help the young person progress.

5. Duties and Responsibilities

Improving the outcomes for Children in Care and ensuring they are included in the life of the college is the responsibility of all staff. As such all staff are responsible for ensuring young people in care are made to feel welcome and included.

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The Children in Care Coordinator acts as the College's Designated Lead for Children in Care and is responsible for ensuring that Children in Care have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers. This includes promoting and coordinating the support Children in Care need, liaising with external agencies as appropriate and meeting regularly with Children in Care and liaising with teaching staff regarding their educational development. The Child in Care Coordinator will also encourage and support Children in Care access a wide range of enrichment and social activities inside and outside the College.

The Finance Team will work with the Children in Care Coordinator and other relevant parties to ensure that Children in Care are identified at enrolment and their financial situation is assessed. The Finance Team will ensure that, where the criteria is met, the Child in Care receives the Bursary Fund promptly and are aware of the range of financial support that is available to them. They will also liaise with and involve parents/carers as appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with the Children in Care Coordinator and is responsible for managing any safeguarding-related concerns in relation to Children in Care and ensuring they are supported. They will also be alert to and aware of the specific needs of Children in Care.

The College Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that the College environment is inclusive and accommodating for Children in Care. It is also responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy in collaboration with the Children in Care Coordinator.

The Principal has overall responsibility for the application of this policy across the college and ensuring that a designated lead is appointed.

Governors are responsible for ensuring a Child in Care Policy is in place and procedures relating to that policy are adhered to.

6. Supporting those in care

6.1 Identifying Children in Care

It is important to identify and recognise Children in Care. Unless we are advised about a student's home circumstances, Children in Care risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work and are vulnerable to under achievement.

As such recognise that it is important to identify Children in Care as early as possible in the application process, in order to assess and meet their academic and support needs, and to support their progression. Most of this work will be carried out through the Inclusive Learning Team.

All students will be asked about their 'care' status as part of the application and enrolment process (this is now essential to identify those who require Bursary funding).

Any declaration that a student is a Child in Care will be dealt with sensitively, and students will be asked who it can be shared with. If they agree, they will be flagged up as potentially

‘vulnerable’ with their Progress Tutor who will prioritise meeting them to assess their support needs.

6.2 Personal Education Plan

All young people in care must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them.

The PEP should include challenging, curriculum-based targets and support the Child in Care's educational progress. If the Child in Care has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

We will endeavour to identify young people in care and care leavers prior to enrolment. This will be achieved through liaison with schools, Children and Young People's Services, HOPE (the virtual school for Children in Care in Bristol) and other social care agencies, and we will use all available paperwork to assist in assessing their support and transition needs.

6.3 Additional support for Young Carers

When a student is identified the following support is available:

- We aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent.
- All Children in Care are entitled to additional personalised tuition in English and/or maths, outside of the core curriculum, as part of the government scheme even if they appear to be reaching expected levels.

6.4 Additional Funding – Pupil Premium

Young people in long-term care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined as a result of Government policy.

We are committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible young people in care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes. The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the PEP.

6.5 Student voice

The views of the Children in Care will be treated as paramount in any decisions that are made about them. The College will also find a range of innovative ways to consult the cohort about any support required, individually or collectively, or new initiatives that they would like the College to develop to support their needs. Any meetings around the young person will be inclusive and person centred in their approach and they will be consulted about who will attend and how they will be run. The College will also actively encourage their involvement in enrichment and other social activities that will provide them with social support and enhance the range of material they have for CVs, personal statements etc.

6.6 Communication with other agencies

We will co-ordinate communication with other agencies through the Children in Care Coordinator. As part of this responsibility the Children in Care Coordinator will:

- Ensure that arrangements are in place to promote effective communication between all those involved with the Child in Care;
- Co-ordinate the Personal Education Plans (PEPs), Reviews, Reports, and attendance etc. from schools;
- Coordinate PEP meetings to ensure that, where relevant, information about progress, attendance, achievement etc. is shared with the young person's social worker in addition to the foster carer or residential social worker;
- Attend relevant review meetings relating to the young person whilst at College;
- Raise any concerns about their academic or pastoral support or general well-being with the appropriate agency.

6.7 Staff awareness and training

In order to ensure that staff members understand the issues faced by Children in Care, training and ongoing professional development about the matter are provided for staff.

6.8 Safeguarding

Children in Care may be more vulnerable to safeguarding concerns than other students.

The College, supported by the DSL, will identify Children in Care who may be in need of early help, and will follow the early help processes outlined within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7. Complaints

If a Child in Care, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should, in the first instance, raise it with the Designated Lead, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within ten days, the Child in Care, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Principal in line with the Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Policy.

8. Equality Impact Statement

We are committed to ensuring that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the way we provide services to our students and the way we treat our staff reflects their individual needs and does not discriminate against individuals or groups on any grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act, which are age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate any individual with particular equality and diversity requirements in implementing this policy and procedure.

9. Further information

9.1 External information

Relevant legislation and statutory requirements that have been taken into consideration for this policy include:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance;
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008;
- The Care Act 2014;
- The Children and Families Act 2014;
- DfE Advice and Guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing;
- Behaviour and Attendance.

9.2 Internal information

Local policies and procedures that have been taken into consideration for this policy include:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Student Attendance Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

10. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of approval.

The policy may be reviewed at an earlier date if necessary, for example, to update it in line with changes in legislation, organisational development or good practice.

Any individual who has queries regarding the content of this policy, or has difficulty understanding how this policy relates to their role, should contact the Policy Author.