



Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Review of Policy	Spring 2026
Members of staff responsible	Head Teacher Designated Teacher for CiC
Policy History	Ratified
People involved	Designated Teacher for CiC Head Teacher LGB
Signed by Chair of LGB	Kevin Floyd
Date	5/3/26
Date for Review	Spring 2027

1. Purpose

To promote the educational achievement, welfare, safeguarding and well-being of children in care and previously looked after children at Wyvern Academy.

Wyvern Academy is committed to providing a safe, secure and inclusive environment where every child is valued and respected. We aim to ensure that children develop independence, resilience and the skills required for lifelong learning, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, background, belief or ability.

This policy is underpinned by current national legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018 (and UK GDPR)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children (as updated)
- Department for Education statutory guidance

This policy also reflects relevant Dorset Local Authority guidance, safeguarding partnership procedures, and Virtual School expectations.

2. The Education of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children

Wyvern Academy aims to maximise opportunity for every pupil to succeed. Children and young people who are looked after and previously looked after by local authorities are among the groups most at risk of underachievement nationally. We are committed to supporting these pupils to achieve their full potential, enjoy their learning and experience success.

Under the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, a child is “looked after” by a local authority if they are:

- In the care of the local authority; or
- Provided with accommodation by the local authority for more than 24 hours.

Categories of Children in Care

Children in care fall into four main groups:

- Children accommodated under a voluntary agreement with parents (Section 20)
- Children subject to a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38)

- Children subject to emergency protection orders (Section 44) or police protection (Section 46)
- Children compulsorily accommodated, including those remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement

The term **Children in Care (CIC)** refers to all children who are looked after by a local authority.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

Previously Looked After Children are those who were previously looked after by a local authority in England or Wales and who left care through:

- Adoption
- A Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- A Child Arrangements Order (CAO)

This definition aligns with DfE statutory guidance.

Virtual School Head (VSH)

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017:

- Every local authority must appoint a **Virtual School Head (VSH)** to promote the educational achievement of children in care.
- Since 2021, VSHs also have a strategic role in promoting the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

Wyvern Academy will work in close partnership with Dorset Virtual School.

3. Aims

Wyvern Academy will:

- Work collaboratively with Dorset Local Authority, social care teams, health services, therapy services and all relevant professionals to meet children's needs.
- Provide a high-quality, inclusive education for children in care and previously looked after children.
- Ensure equality of opportunity and remove barriers to progress.
- Promote high expectations, stability and aspiration.
- Respect confidentiality and the child's right to privacy.
- Work in partnership with the Virtual School Head to ensure effective use of **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)**.
- Ensure that previously looked after children can access appropriate support and advice from the Virtual School where required.

4. To ensure these aims are achieved Wyvern Academy will:

- Appoint a qualified Designated Teacher (DT) (Debbi Williams) in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Ensure the DT has appropriate time and training to fulfil the role.
- Ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- Maintain accurate, secure and confidential records in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Promote trauma-informed and attachment-aware approaches.
- Monitor attendance, attainment, progress, exclusions and wellbeing of CIC and PLAC.
- Report regularly to the Trustee Board on outcomes and provision.
- Liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings which will be either the DT, Head of Department or class teacher.
- Work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after and previously looked after children receive their full entitlements including provision and access to school news and information.

5. Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

The Virtual School oversees Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all children in care.

- A PEP must be initiated within 10 working days of a child entering care or joining the school.
- PEPs must be reviewed termly.
- The Pupil Premium Plus allocation and planned impact must be clearly recorded in the PEP.
- The child or young person must be supported to contribute to their PEP.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure PEPs are high quality and outcome-focused.
- Track academic progress and wider development.
- Ensure barriers to learning are identified and addressed.
- Advocate for additional support where required.

Previously Looked After Children do not have statutory PEPs; however:

- Their needs will be identified through school monitoring systems.
- Pupil Premium Plus (where parents choose to declare status) will be used strategically.
- Support will be reviewed regularly with parents/carers.

Children in Care are identified as a vulnerable group within the school's tracking systems, in line with safeguarding expectations under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

6. Allocation of Resources

The Trustee Board will ensure:

- Pupil Premium Plus funding is used effectively and transparently.
- Spending decisions are evidence-informed.
- Impact is reviewed termly.
- Funding supports academic progress, emotional wellbeing and enrichment.

7. Staff Development

Wyvern Academy will ensure:

- The Designated Teacher undertakes statutory training every two years.
- All staff receive safeguarding training in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- Training includes:
 - Attachment and trauma-informed practice
 - Mental health awareness
 - Online safeguarding
 - SEND awareness
 - The impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

8. Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We are committed to strong partnership working with:

- Foster carers
- Adoptive parents
- Special guardians
- Social workers
- Virtual School staff
- Other relevant professionals

We recognise that positive collaboration supports educational stability and improved outcomes.

Review meetings, PEP meetings and safeguarding processes will promote shared responsibility and clear communication.

9. Roles and responsibilities in school

The Trustee Board

Trustees will fulfil their responsibilities to looked after children through:

- Ensuring that this policy is implemented
- Nominating a trustee to maintain interest in the well-being of looked after and previously looked after children (Helen Hunt)
- Ensuring that the Trustee Board takes up suitable training opportunities
- Monitoring appropriate training for school staff

The Head Teacher (HT)

The Head Teacher has day to day responsibility for the management and organisation of the school and is the first point of contact for any matters relating to the pupils.

The HT will fulfil responsibility to looked after children through:

- Ensuring that this policy is approved by the Trustee Board and that it is reviewed annually
- Ensuring that any practical guidelines needed to ensure the well-being of any particular child are identified
- Liaising with teachers to take pastoral responsibility and ensure the well-being and education of looked after and previously looked after children
- Monitoring and informing of the legal position with regard to parental access, provision of schools reports
- Promoting the role of key workers and carers
- Ensuring sensitivity relating to the child's past experiences
- Managing any other relevant information
- Ensuring that the school maintains communication with the Virtual School Head, especially when there are significant updates related to the educational progress or status of any looked after children.

The HT should report to the Trustee Board on:

- Admissions
- Progress and achievement
- Attendance
- Significant safeguarding concerns
- Use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus

The HT should ensure appropriate training opportunities are taken up and promote and maintain good working relationships with other key personnel on other agencies.

The Designated Teacher (DT)

The DT will:

- Promote high aspirations and challenge low expectations.
 - Ensure PEPs are completed and reviewed termly.
 - Liaise with social workers, carers and the Virtual School.
 - Monitor progress and intervene early.
 - Ensure staff understand each child's needs.
 - Safeguard confidentiality.
 - Ensure smooth transitions.
 - Undertake statutory training every two years.
 - Support staff to understand attachment, trauma and the impact of care experiences.
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See also:

1. Dorset Virtual School

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/children-in-care/dorset-virtual-school>

2. Dorset Virtual School Handbook

<https://www.dorsetnexus.org.uk/Article/60703>

3. Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities DfE 2018

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This policy/procedure is to be read in conjunction with all others that come under the Wyvern Safeguarding family of policies.

These are: Child Protection, Behaviour (including anti-bullying), Staff Code of Conduct, SRE, Intimate Care, Medical, Whistle-Blowing, Health and Safety, E-Safety, Safer Recruitment, Complaints, Allegations Procedures, Attendance (pupils), Data Protection, Looked after Children, Lone Working, Manual Handling, Pool Safety Operating Procedures, Violence at Work.

As such, reference is made to the key guidance documents: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2019. Children and Social Work Act 2017