



Huxlow Academy

Ambition • Respect • Pride

Policy Owner	Department	Effective Date	Approval Date	Review Cycle	Revision Due Date
R.Roberts	Safeguarding	May 2023	May 2024	Annual	Mar 2026

Children in Care Policy

Policy Approver: Local Governing Body

Version Number	Date of Change	Changes Made
1	4-1-22	Updated SENCO name
2	March 2025	Renamed to reflect new naming convention of Child in Care. Terminology amended through document. Updated to reflect changes in practice and to add detail to specific roles. New Designated teacher name added.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the outcomes of children in care and children previously in care whilst playing their part in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, intervention and evaluation. Schools should also be a predictable and safe environment for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children make and maintain friendships, grow in knowledge, skill and social confidence, develop their identity and experience positive interactions with adult role models. Huxlow Academy is a place where children in care and children previously in care can feel safe and can be themselves.
- 1.2. Colleagues at Huxlow Academy are expected to be ambitious for children in care or children that have previously been in care. Research has highlighted that schools with high expectations for attainment and social development, supported by quality education delivery for children in care and children previously in care, improved the educational experience and achievements of children in care and children previously in care.

2. Policy Aims

The academy aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 3.1. This Policy takes its legal framework from the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children 2018
- Promoting the health and well-being of looked after children 2015
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children 2018
- Pupil premium: effective use and accountability 2019
- Working together to safeguard children 2018
- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009

- 3.2. Schools must

- Create a culture where children in care and children previously in care are listened to, their view and account considered and clearly recorded in decision making.
- Ensure the welfare of the child is paramount when decisions are made to affect their educational, physical, emotional and mental health needs.
- Promote the attendance of children in care and children previously in care.
- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all children in care.
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all children in care.
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of suspensions for all children in care and children

previously in care.

- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of children in care and children previously in care.
- Develop systems of communication, accurate record keeping and protocols. These systems should be utilised within the life of the academy and to ensure consistently high levels of communication with parents, carers and relevant professionals.
- Work together with external partners and agencies for example, the Police, the NHS and Children's Services to support and safeguard children in care and children previously in care.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. A child who has been in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a child in care. Children in care have varied living arrangements and there are a number of complexities to consider in establishing the legal status of a child, but commonly children in care may be living with approved foster carers, in a residential placement or placed with known individuals who may be under assessment (to provide care) by the local authority (kinship care). Children are placed in the care of the local authority for various and complex reasons, for example: with the consent of their parent following social care intervention due to abuse, family illness or breakdown, the child may be an unaccompanied asylum seeker, the child may have significant additional needs that requires specialist placement etc.
- 4.2. A child previously placed in care is a child no longer subject to a legal order placing them in the care of the local authority. This may be for a number of reasons, for example, they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship, child arrangements order or, in some instances where the child's care has been discharged to those with parental responsibility.

5. The Academy Policy on Children In Care

- 5.1. The academy will:
- 5.1.1. Work alongside the virtual school headteacher (VSH), social workers and other agencies to ensure that each child in care has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
 - 5.1.2. Provide and actively develop a climate of acceptance that removes barriers to social and educational success whilst challenging negative stereotypes.
 - 5.1.3. Ensure all children in care or children previously in care have opportunities explicitly promoted that encourage participation in the full curriculum, careers guidance, enrichment activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
 - 5.1.4. Ensure accurate recording and information sharing that is targeted and relevant to colleagues in order to offer discretion in regard to a child's legal status. This accuracy and appropriate information sharing will ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are placed in care, especially surrounding the welfare curriculum and elements of the curriculum that explore identity and family formation for example.
 - 5.1.5. Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, every 2 years and that information is cascaded to school staff as appropriate.
 - 5.1.6. Seek to review all academy policies regularly in the light of the Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care. Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies (e.g Virtual School, Social Care, Health).
 - 5.1.7. Promote all children in care and children previously in care educated in the academy to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential by ensuring academic and social strengths, needs and vulnerabilities are clearly understood by colleagues including (where appropriate) inclusion

colleagues. Any intervention and support should be clearly recorded and sought in collaboration with parents, carers, local authority colleagues and academy staff

5.2. Admission/Induction Arrangements

- 5.2.1. Children in care and children previously in care are a priority for admission.
- 5.2.2. On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. The designated teacher will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child has sustained support (welfare check-ins, inclusion and academic monitoring) for a transition period of 6 weeks. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and an information sharing meeting will be held within 5 days of the records being received. Those attending the meeting should include but are not limited to the carer/parent, social worker other relevant professionals and child as appropriate.
- 5.2.3. In this initial information sharing meeting, information will be gathered and recorded in regards to delegated authority as applicable to school reports, school information sharing and consent for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed.
- 5.2.4. It is essential that school administrators enter the date a child became a child in care (and any relevant end date for children previously in care) and the responsible local authority on Bromcom at the earliest opportunity. This information is used for Census, funding and safeguarding profiles for the school and is a requirement. It may be appropriate for evidence of legal status to be requested from carers/legal guardians and this should be done in discussion with the designated teacher/designated safeguarding lead.

5.3. School Trips and Special Activities

- 5.3.1. Given the delays that some children in care can experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that children in care enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

5.4. Complaints

- 5.4.1. If a child, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.
- 5.4.2. Any issue that remains unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the child's education. This meeting may include any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the response.
- 5.4.3. If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the child, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint which will be investigated in accordance with the academy's Complaints policy.

6. Record keeping - Personal Education Plans

- 6.1. Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. It must include the contact details of the VSH for the authority that looks after the child. The school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.
- 6.2. The PEP will consider:

- The child's strengths and interests, including an overview of the enrichment opportunities accessed within school and those activities the child is accessing or would benefit from accessing outside of school.
- Educational strengths and progress along with any identified learning needs or vulnerabilities. This overview should include an outline of planned intervention by the relevant professional where needs and/or vulnerabilities have been identified.
- An overview of the child's physical, social and mental wellbeing including any identified needs or vulnerabilities. This overview should include an outline of planned intervention by the relevant professional where needs and/or vulnerabilities have been identified and an outline of planned intervention to meet these needs and support vulnerabilities.
- Future plans, including but not limited to, work experience, school trips and enrichment opportunities, career and further education aspirations and opportunities and how these can be supported by the professionals contributing to the PEP.
- Any issues arising for the child.
- All PEP meetings should include the setting of targets to be recorded on the PEP.

6.3. The academy will retain records evidencing compliance with this policy, as set out in the Data Retention Policy. The record of a PEP meeting should include as a minimum: attendees, areas discussed, decisions made and any outstanding actions along with action owners. The record should be entered onto CPOMs. Any formal documentation of the PEP where available should also be stored on CPOMs

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1. The information of children in care or children previously in care must be shared appropriately within the academy. Children may not want school staff to be aware of their legal status for a number of reasons. The Headteacher and designated teacher will seek to understand a child's history and presentation in order to establish the appropriate communication with the child and colleagues in respect of their legal status. However, in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible. The Headteacher and Designated Teacher are the named staff responsible for ensuring that all children in care have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Headteacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with children in care and children previously in care.

7.2. The Headteacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher.
- ensure that the designated teacher receives appropriate training every 2 years.
- consult the VSH regarding appropriate provision and ensure that all avenues of support have been explored.
- oversee the consistent application of the children in care and children previously in care policy.
- be responsible for all systems to support children in care and children previously in care.
- report to the Governing body on a termly basis on the following:
 - the number of children in care pupils in the school. an analysis of assessment information for children in care children as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - the attendance of children in care children, compared to other pupils.
 - the level of suspensions and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils.
 - the number of complaints.

7.3. For children in care or children previously in care, education can be an important protective factor, providing a safe space to access support, be visible to professionals and realise their potential. When children are not in an academy, they miss the protection and opportunities it can provide, and

become more vulnerable to harm. However, Headteacher will balance this important reality with the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all pupils and staff, so should devise strategies that take both of these aspects into account.

- 7.4. Where a child in care is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher will contact the local authority's Virtual School Head (VSH) as soon as possible. The VSH, working with the designated teacher and others, will consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the academy address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion. Where relevant, the academy will also engage with a child's social worker, foster carers, or children's home workers.
- 7.5. All children in care should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is part of any behaviour-based plan. This should be reviewed every term and any concerns about the pupil's behaviour should be recorded, as well as how the pupil is being supported to improve their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of exclusion.
- 7.6. Where children previously in care face the risk of being suspended or permanently excluded, the academy will engage with the child's parents and the academy's DT. The academy will also seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support the pupil.
- 7.7. The Designated Teacher
 - 7.7.1. The designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at Huxlow Academy. The designated teacher is: Laura Gauvrit Senior Assistant Headteacher.
 - 7.7.2. They are a central point of contact within the school. This helps to ensure that the academy plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
 - 7.7.3. The most effective designated teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every child in care and child previously in care on the school's roll. This involves, working with VSHs to promote the education of children in care and children previously in care and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every child in care and child previously in care matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
 - 7.7.4. The Designated teachers take a lead responsibility for ensuring academy staff understand the things which can affect how children in care and children previously in care learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:
 - have high expectations of children in care and children previously in care and their learning, setting targets to accelerate educational progress;
 - are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment and trauma awareness). Understand that as a direct result of early life and current experiences some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
 - understand how important it is to see children in care and children previously children in care in care as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them different from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their child in care or child previously in care status;
 - appreciate the central importance of the child in care'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;
 - 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

- for children previously in care, 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.

7.7.5. Designated teachers will also have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of children in care and children previously in care, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by:

- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:
 - they do not put children in care and children previously in care at a disadvantage;
 - there is effective induction for children in care and children previously in care starting school, new to the academy and new to care. Particular account is taken of the child's needs and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what they can achieve
 - there are effective procedures in place to support a children in care and children previously in care with their learning;
 - 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 children previously in care children are reminded that they need to inform the academy if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and
 - Children in care and children previously in care participation and access to general activities and experiences the academy offers to all its pupils is promoted and barriers identified and removed without prejudice (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for children in care to attend meetings).
- Promoting a culture in which children in care and children previously in care;
 - 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;
 - 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;
 - are encouraged to participate in academy activities and in decision making within the academy and the care system;
 - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
 - can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
 - Being a source of advice for teachers about: differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are children in care or children previously in care, to include ensuring reasonable adjustments are made in anticipation of and in response to learning and behavioural needs and;
 - the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of children in care and children previously in care, 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.
- Working directly with children in care and children previously in care and their carers, parents or guardians to:

- promote good home-school links;
 - support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the academy teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and
 - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
- having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of PEPs for children in care within the academy in partnership with others as necessary; and
 - working closely with the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children in care and children previously in care are quickly and effectively responded to.

7.7.6. When supporting children previously in care, designated teachers should be aware of the following: 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. 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.

8. Policy Status

- 8.1. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.
- 8.2. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for Children who are Looked After / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCO. At every review, it will be approved by the Governing Body.

9. Related Policies

- 9.1. This policy is related to the following other Trust policies:
- Admissions Policy
 - SEND Policy
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Exclusions Policy



Signed: _____
 Chair of Local Governing Body
 Date: 15.03.25