

An Daras Multi Academy Trust

Policy for the Education of Children in Care

The An Daras Multi Academy Trust (ADMAT) Company

An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee

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Policy for the Education of Children in Care

At An Daras we believe that all Children in Care, previously looked-after children, children in kinship care (including those with a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order) and children with a social worker should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve in line with or better than all Cornwall and Devon children and children nationally. We, as a Trust community, aim to be champions and advocates for these children and young people 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.

Scope of this policy

This policy sets out how our schools discharge their statutory duties in respect of the following groups of children, whose legal definitions and the statutory support available to them changed with the introduction of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026:

- Children in Care (Looked After Children, CiC) - children who are subject to a Care Order or who are voluntarily accommodated by a local authority under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, including kinship foster placements.
- Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) - children who left care through adoption, a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), a Child Arrangements Order (CAO) that used to be a Residence Order, or who were adopted from care outside England and Wales.
- Children in Kinship Care - a term now defined in law by section 22I of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026), covering children raised by a relative or connected person otherwise than as their parent, including under an SGO or a 'lives with' CAO, in kinship foster care, or through an informal family arrangement.
- Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) - children who are, or have been, subject to a Child in Need (CIN) plan or a Child Protection (CP) plan under sections 17 or 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Each school will have a Designated Teacher for CiC.

Each school will have a second contact for CiC if DT is unavailable.

Our aims to support Children in Care

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Close the gap - bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line or better to those of their peers.
- Ensure appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus* to support education
- 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.
- Identify our schools' role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care.
- Always ask the question: 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- All settings are required to have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate) and social workers and health on a wide variety of

educational and care issues. This person will be required to make financial decisions in the best interest of the child

- All staff, directors and local governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care 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.

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

(Statutory regulations from September 2009, extended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to cover previously looked-after children, and updated by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026)

The Designated Teacher must:

- ***Be a qualified teacher, head teacher, EY setting manager***
- Maintain a register of all Children in Care in the school (this includes children from both in and out of Cornwall)
- The register will include a record of: the contact person in the Virtual School for CiC, Care status, type of placement (e.g. foster, respite, residential, adoptive), name of Social Worker, CiC nurse, area social care office and contact number
- Liaise with SENCo / class teacher and other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis
- Ensure statutory documentation is kept up to date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability i.e. Electronic termly Personal Education Plan

The Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP)

The EPEP is now in place as of September 2017 – this is through Welfare Call – guidance on the Virtual schools' webpages.

(taken from 'Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children', February 2018 DfE)

31. All looked after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral and legal part.

32. All of those involved in the process of developing the PEP should use it to support the personalised learning of the child.

33. The PEP (pre-school to age 18) is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations and builds life chances.

34. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school and as part of the Corporate parent role. Social workers, carers, VSHs, designated teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. All of those involved in the PEP process at all stages should involve the child (according to understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent and/or relevant family member.

PEP content

(taken from 'Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children', February 2018 DfE)

35. The range of education and development needs that should be covered in a PEP includes:

- access to a nursery or other high-quality early years provision that is appropriate to the child's age (e.g. pre-school, playgroups) and that meets their identified developmental needs
- on-going catch-up support for those who have fallen behind with school work (including use of effective intervention strategies)
- provision of immediate suitable education where a child is not in school (e.g. because of temporary suspension)
- appropriate transition support where needed, such as when a child begins to attend a new school or returns to school (e.g. moving from pre-school, primary to secondary school or following illness or exclusion) or when a child has a plan for gradual reintegration

37. The designated teacher leads on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored.

Information to be recorded includes:

- Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns. E.g. name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
- Who holds parental responsibility (PR) for the child
- Share Child Protection / disability information if appropriate (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information)
- Relevant health information
- Baseline information, attainment, progress and all test/ assessment results.
- Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.
- The child is entitled to decide who attends their Children in Care Statutory Reviews; if school do not attend they need to submit a quality written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their personal education plan.
- Participate in appropriate termly DT training or induction training and joint agency training with The Virtual school – *there is a requirement to attend in line with annual safeguarding return the S175/157*
- If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care, contact and advice should be sought from the Education Safeguarding teams and Cornwall MASSH (Multi-agency Support and Safeguarding Hub) or Devon Front Door (Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership)

PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN

Previously looked-after children (those who left care through adoption, a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangements Order) can continue to experience the effects of their earlier experiences, and the Designated Teacher's statutory role, set out in 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children' (DfE, February 2018), extends to this group. The school will:

- ensure the Designated Teacher provides information and advice, on request, to adoptive parents, special guardians and holders of a Child Arrangements Order to help them support the child's education;
- ensure parents/carers are aware that these children are eligible for Pupil Premium Plus and that the school will discuss with them, at least annually, how this funding is best used to support the child;
- signpost families to the Virtual School for advice and support where a previously looked-after child is experiencing difficulty, recognising that the Virtual School Head (VSH) has a statutory duty to provide such advice on request.

CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE

Kinship care is now defined in law by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, which inserts section 22I into the Children Act 1989. This covers children living with a relative or connected person under a Special Guardianship Order or a 'lives with' Child Arrangements Order, in kinship foster care, or through an informal family arrangement. The Act places a statutory duty on the Virtual School Head to champion the education of all children in kinship care in the local authority area, and requires local authorities to publish a 'kinship local offer' setting out the support available to kinship families. The school will:

- ask parents/carers at admission whether a child is being raised in a kinship care arrangement, so that appropriate support and identification can be put in place;
- ensure Designated Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads receive training that includes the distinct needs and experiences of kinship children, and foster a kinship-friendly culture within the school;
- signpost kinship carers to the Local Authority's published kinship local offer for information on the financial, practical and educational support available to them;
- note that where a kinship child was previously looked after (for example, via an SGO or CAO made from care), they will also be eligible for Pupil Premium Plus and the previously looked-after children provision set out above.

CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER, INCLUDING THOSE ON A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Since 2021 the Virtual School Head's role has included strategic oversight of children with a social worker (those currently or previously subject to a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection plan); the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 places this duty on a statutory footing. This is a strategic, local-authority-level duty and does not replace the school's own safeguarding responsibilities or the day-to-day role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where a child at our school is subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection plan, the school will:

- ensure the DSL and Designated Teacher work together, recognising that attendance and engagement in education are important protective factors and that changes in either can be a sign of risk;
- attend, or provide a written report to, statutory Child in Need and Child Protection meetings as requested, and notify the child's social worker of any concerns about attendance, exclusion risk or attainment;
- engage with any local multi-agency child protection arrangements and share information using the child's consistent child identifier where this has been introduced, in line with the school's safeguarding policy;
- engage constructively with the Virtual School where it undertakes strategic work to raise aspirations and improve joint working for this group of children, whilst

recognising the VSH is not expected to case-manage individual children with a social worker.

LOCAL GOVERNORS_- what every Designated Local Governor for CIC should know:

- **Number of CIC on school roll**
 - **Number of CIC with up to date PEPs**
 - **Overall attainment & progress of CIC in the school / performance compared to peers and national**
 - **Number of CIC with SEN and statements/ EHC Plans- level of support in place**
 - **Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of CIC**
 - **Number of CIC who have been excluded / suspended in previous 12 months**
 - **How LA supports educational achievement of CIC**
 - **Use of Pupil premium plus spend and impact on attainment**
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- The Local Governing body at each school within the MAT should ensure the DT has opportunity to attend training.
 - School staff and governors are aware of the *Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* DFE February 2018
 - There is a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004 (still remains in place despite Act updates)
 - There is a dedicated Local Governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its Children in Care as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children
 - Take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Children in Care attending their school
 - Designated teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the head teacher/head of school

Whole school approach:

- The school celebrates the achievements of Children in Care.
- Teachers should have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition
- The young person will need to have a special, trusted adult in school that is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- For young Children in Care, there should be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the child from school
- All teachers within the school are made aware of the needs of Children in Care and actively promote their best interests
- Adults in school will need to be sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children in Care

- The designated teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies, and that high educational expectations are maintained
- A nurturing approach and understanding of trauma and attachment will help to support children in care – Trauma Informed School strategies enabled
- Support the engagement of Children in Care in out of school hours learning
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance
- Teachers can help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis
- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'Child in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given
- Teachers can be aware of a variety of emotional issues and trauma that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process, including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem
- Teachers need to be aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers
- CiC have access to Pupil premium plus. See EEF / Sutton trust for guidance on use, good practice and impact of PP+

Special Educational Needs: see Local Authority SEND graduated response documents

- Any special educational needs are quickly identified, and appropriate provision is made – early identification and action is key
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving, and have early interventions to improve this
- Contact needs to be made with the Virtual School for CiC as soon as concerns are raised
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational needs 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

Admissions and transitions:

- CiC have priority on school admission
- Prioritise Children in Care within schools' own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care.
- Adhere to Cornwall Council/Devon Council School Admissions protocols
- Awareness of 'Placement of pupils out of their chronological year group'
- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- We will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience

Attendance:

- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established
- Inform Attendance Officer / Social Worker / Virtual School if any concerns about attendance
- Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern
- If a child is on a protection plan, ensure Social worker and Carer are contacted if child is absent from school
- Children in Care should not be taken out of school for holidays
- There should be no unauthorised absences for CiC
- Safety plans to be put in place where a CiC is on a reduced timetable or CME/CMOE

Exclusion:

- Identify any Child in Care who is at risk of suspension or exclusion and contact the Virtual School, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school
- 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 exclusion, 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 excluded pupil to continue his/her education.
- Make sure in the event of any suspension or exclusion, contact is made with the Virtual School with details of the suspension or exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been suspended or excluded so that an appropriate response can be made.

Multi-agency liaison:

- The CiC Designated Teacher will need to 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
- There should be a well planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the young person's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented
- There needs to be clear understanding about the role and responsibility of school staff in relation to the young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved
- School staff will need to share positive perceptions and high expectations of the young person with other professionals but especially with the young person
- The school should be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the natural parents
- Designated teachers should ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations

- Encourage each child in care to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self –esteem and learning
- Support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making

At risk:

- Schools to be made aware / share information if they feel a CiC is at risk in any way
- Schools to be aware and have a safety plan in place with regards to absconding, going missing and or at risk of exploitation

Related documentation:

See Cornwall and Devon's Virtual School Websites for more information:

[Awena - Cornwall Virtual School](#)

[Devon Virtual School](#)

Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, DfE February 2018

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (inserting section 22I into the Children Act 1989 - definition of kinship care, and extending the statutory duties of the Virtual School Head to children in need, children on a child protection plan, and children in kinship care)

Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension, DfE

Section 52, Children Act 2004 - duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children (remains in force)

Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children) DCSF 2009

Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in secondary schools DCSF 2009

Special Educational Needs SEN Code of Practice 2015