



The Levett School

Positivity | Determination | Reflection | Integrity

Children in Care Policy

<i>Policy agreed by Management Committee on:</i>	
<i>Review date for Management Committee:</i>	
<i>Allocated Group/Person to Review:</i>	Emma Place
<i>Agreed frequency of Review, by allocated person:</i>	Every Year
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1. Statement of Intent

The Levett School is committed to promoting the educational achievement, wellbeing, safety and positive life outcomes of Children in Care (CiC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC).

As a pupil referral unit, The Levett School recognises that pupils may join the school following disruption to their education, changes in placement, difficulties accessing previous educational provision or a need for alternative provision. The school provides structured, supportive and individualised education designed to improve engagement, attendance, behaviour, progress and readiness for the next stage of education.

The school recognises that Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children have individual experiences, strengths and needs. Staff will not make assumptions about a pupil based solely on their care status. Provision will be informed by the individual pupil's needs, views, educational history, SEND, SEMH, safeguarding circumstances and aspirations.

The Levett School will work collaboratively with pupils, parents and carers, social workers, the Doncaster Virtual School, the local authority, mainstream schools, health professionals and other relevant agencies.

Where a pupil is dual registered, The Levett School will work closely with the pupil's other registered school to promote continuity of education, appropriate information sharing and a coordinated approach to safeguarding, attendance, SEND, progress and transition. Responsibilities will be determined in accordance with the pupil's registration arrangements and agreed placement arrangements.

As placements at The Levett School are intended to support pupils during a defined period of alternative provision, educational planning will consider both the pupil's immediate needs and their longer-term educational pathway.

The school aims to:

- promote high expectations, educational progress and positive outcomes;
- provide a safe, stable and consistent learning environment;
- identify and reduce barriers to learning, attendance and engagement;
- provide appropriate support for SEND, SEMH and other identified needs;
- ensure that pupils' views, wishes and aspirations inform educational planning;
- ensure that Personal Education Plans are meaningful, current and outcome-focused;
- provide evidence-informed intervention and support based on identified need;
- monitor the impact of provision on educational outcomes;
- work effectively with the Virtual School and wider multi-agency network;
- promote positive relationships, belonging and inclusion; and
- support successful transition to the pupil's next educational placement.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has regard to the following legislation, statutory guidance and national requirements:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children* – DfE statutory guidance
- *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children* – DfE statutory guidance
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*
- *Working together to improve school attendance* – current statutory guidance
- *Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement* – current statutory guidance
- Current DfE Pupil Premium conditions of grant
- Current DfE guidance relating to children with a social worker
- Current Doncaster Local Authority and Doncaster Virtual School guidance and procedures.

The policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- SEMH Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Information Management and Data Protection arrangements
- Admissions and Placement procedures
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality Policy

3. Definitions

3.1 Children in Care

For the purposes of this policy, Children in Care are children who are looked after by a local authority under the relevant provisions of the Children Act 1989.

The school will use the term **Children in Care (CiC)** throughout this policy.

3.2 Previously Looked-After Children

A Previously Looked-After Child (PLAC) is a child who was previously looked after but ceased to be looked after because of:

- adoption;
- a Special Guardianship Order; or
- a Child Arrangements Order which resulted in the child leaving care.

The statutory definition and eligibility criteria for Pupil Premium Plus will be applied in accordance with current DfE guidance.

3.3 Personal Education Plan

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) forms part of the care planning process for a child in care. It is an educational planning document which identifies the child's educational needs, aspirations, barriers, outcomes and provision.

The PEP should be a working document which is reviewed and updated rather than a record completed solely for compliance.

4. Scope and Principles

The Levett School will apply the following principles to all CiC and PLAC:

High expectations

Care status will never be used as a reason to lower expectations of achievement, behaviour, attendance, independence or future opportunities.

Individualised support

Support will be based on the individual pupil's strengths, needs and circumstances rather than assumptions about children in care as a group.

Stability and consistency

The school will provide clear routines, predictable expectations and consistent adult responses to promote security and engagement.

Educational achievement

Educational progress will remain central to planning. Academic gaps, attendance, behaviour and SEMH needs will be considered as interconnected barriers where appropriate.

Pupil voice

Pupils will be supported to express their views, wishes and aspirations and these will inform educational planning.

Safeguarding

The school will remain alert to safeguarding concerns and will follow the school's safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.

Partnership

The school will work collaboratively with carers, social workers, the Virtual School, parents where appropriate, mainstream schools and other professionals.

Successful transition

As a PRU, the school will consider the pupil's longer-term educational pathway from the beginning of their placement and will support timely transition where appropriate.

5. Identification and Confidentiality

The school will maintain accurate records identifying pupils who are Children in Care or Previously Looked-After Children.

The Designated Teacher will maintain oversight of the cohort and ensure that relevant staff have sufficient information to understand and meet individual educational and safeguarding needs.

Information regarding a pupil's care status will be shared appropriately and on a need-to-know basis.

Staff will respect the pupil's privacy and will not disclose a pupil's care status unnecessarily to other pupils, parents or members of the wider school community.

Where appropriate, staff will be informed of relevant information required to support:

- safeguarding;
- educational planning;
- behaviour and SEMH support;
- attendance;
- SEND provision;
- communication with carers and professionals; and
- transition.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Management Committee

The Management Committee will provide strategic oversight of the school's provision for Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children.

The Management Committee will:

- ensure that a Designated Teacher is appointed;

- ensure that the Designated Teacher has sufficient time, resources and appropriate training to fulfil the role;
- ensure that the school has effective procedures for supporting CiC and PLAC;
- monitor the effectiveness of school arrangements;
- receive appropriate information regarding attendance, progress, safeguarding, behaviour and outcomes;
- provide challenge where outcomes or provision require improvement; and
- ensure that statutory duties are met.

Individual pupil information will only be reported to the Management Committee where appropriate and in accordance with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

6.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- provide strategic leadership for provision for CiC and PLAC;
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is appropriately supported;
- ensure that the policy is implemented effectively;
- ensure appropriate resources are available;
- ensure effective partnership working with the Virtual School, local authority and other agencies;
- monitor the impact of provision;
- ensure that safeguarding concerns are managed through the school's safeguarding arrangements; and
- ensure that decisions relating to behaviour, suspension and permanent exclusion comply with statutory requirements.

6.3 Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher is the school's lead professional for Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children.

The Designated Teacher will:

- act as a central point of contact for educational matters relating to CiC and PLAC;
- promote high expectations and educational achievement;
- develop positive and trusting relationships with pupils;
- ensure that the pupil's voice is represented;
- coordinate the school's contribution to the PEP;
- ensure that educational needs and barriers are clearly identified;
- monitor progress, attainment, attendance and engagement;
- monitor the impact of interventions and support;
- liaise with the Virtual School and Raising Achievement Officer;
- work with social workers, carers and other professionals;
- ensure appropriate staff are aware of relevant needs and strategies;
- contribute to care reviews and other relevant meetings;
- work closely with the SENDCo where a pupil has SEND;
- contribute to transition and reintegration planning;

- monitor the effective use of relevant funding;
- identify training needs for staff; and
- report relevant cohort-level information to senior leaders and the Management Committee.

The Designated Teacher will not replace the responsibilities of the social worker, Virtual School, Independent Reviewing Officer or other statutory professionals.

6.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- ensure that safeguarding concerns relating to CiC and PLAC are managed through the school's safeguarding procedures;
- maintain appropriate safeguarding information;
- liaise with social workers and other safeguarding professionals;
- ensure staff understand how to report concerns;
- ensure that safeguarding information is shared appropriately;
- contribute to multi-agency planning where safeguarding concerns arise; and
- ensure practice reflects current statutory safeguarding guidance.

The DSL and Designated Teacher will work closely together but retain their distinct responsibilities.

6.5 SENDCo

The SENDCo will:

- ensure that SEND is appropriately identified and assessed;
- coordinate SEND provision where required;
- work with the Designated Teacher to ensure that SEND needs are reflected in the PEP and wider planning;
- ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments and adaptations are considered;
- contribute to EHCP processes where applicable;
- liaise with specialist services; and
- monitor the impact of SEND provision.

6.6 All Staff

All staff will:

- treat CiC and PLAC with dignity, respect and sensitivity;
- maintain high expectations;
- follow agreed strategies and support plans;
- promote positive relationships and inclusion;
- remain alert to changes in presentation, attendance, behaviour or wellbeing;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- contribute to a consistent and supportive approach.

7. Personal Education Plans

The Levett School will contribute to a current and meaningful PEP for every Child in Care on roll.

The PEP will be used to identify:

- the pupil's educational starting point;
- strengths and interests;
- attainment and progress;
- gaps in learning;
- attendance and engagement;
- SEND needs;
- SEMH needs;
- barriers to learning;
- the pupil's views and aspirations;
- agreed outcomes;
- provision and interventions;
- responsible professionals;
- timescales; and
- measures of impact.

PEP targets will be specific and measurable wherever possible.

The PEP will link appropriately with other plans and processes, including:

- EHCPs;
- SEND Support Plans;
- SEMH plans;
- attendance plans;
- behaviour support;
- safeguarding plans; and
- transition plans.

The school will avoid unnecessary duplication between plans.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that information from the PEP informs day-to-day educational provision.

Where progress is limited, the Designated Teacher will work with relevant professionals to identify the reasons and review the effectiveness of provision.

8. Educational Provision and Progress

The Levett School will provide an appropriate curriculum that reflects the pupil's age, needs, prior learning and placement objectives.

For pupils with disrupted educational histories, staff will establish an appropriate baseline and identify significant gaps in learning.

The school will maintain high expectations while providing appropriate adaptations and support.

Provision may include:

- high-quality classroom teaching;
- adaptive teaching;
- targeted intervention;
- literacy and numeracy support;
- SEMH support;
- therapeutic approaches where appropriate;
- communication support;
- specialist advice;
- careers and aspiration work;
- enrichment opportunities; and
- support for independence and successful transition.

The school will monitor:

- progress from starting points;
- engagement;
- attendance;
- behaviour;
- independence;
- intervention impact; and
- readiness for transition.

Where a pupil is dual registered, the school will work with the other registered school to support continuity and avoid unnecessary duplication.

9. Attendance

The Levett School recognises that regular attendance is an important foundation for educational progress, wellbeing and successful reintegration.

Attendance will be monitored closely for all CiC and PLAC.

Where attendance is a concern, the school will consider:

- the pupil's individual circumstances;
- care arrangements;
- SEND;
- SEMH;
- transport;
- relationships;
- barriers to engagement;
- previous educational experiences; and
- any safeguarding concerns.

The Designated Teacher will work with the pupil, carer, social worker, Virtual School and relevant professionals to identify barriers and agree appropriate support.

Attendance information will contribute to the PEP and other relevant planning.

The school will follow its Attendance Policy and current statutory attendance guidance.

10. SEND

The school recognises that Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children may also have special educational needs and disabilities.

Care status will not be used as an explanation for educational difficulty without appropriate assessment.

Where SEND is identified, the school will follow its graduated approach of:

Assess → Plan → Do → Review

The school will:

- identify barriers to learning;
- use appropriate assessment information;
- involve the pupil and relevant adults;
- provide appropriate adaptations and interventions;
- seek specialist advice where required;
- monitor impact; and
- review provision where progress is limited.

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the school will deliver the provision specified within the plan insofar as it is within the school's agreed placement and responsibilities, and will contribute to statutory reviews as required.

The Designated Teacher and SENDCo will work together to ensure that educational planning is coordinated.

11. Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Levett School recognises that some Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children may have experienced adverse childhood experiences, disruption, loss or changes in relationships.

However, the school will not make assumptions about an individual pupil's experiences or needs based solely on their care status.

Being a Child in Care or Previously Looked-After Child does not in itself constitute a safeguarding concern.

Staff will remain alert to changes in:

- behaviour;
- presentation;
- attendance;
- relationships;
- emotional wellbeing;
- communication;
- online activity;
- peer relationships; and
- family or care circumstances.

All safeguarding concerns will be reported in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The DSL will lead safeguarding responses and will liaise with the relevant social worker and other professionals where appropriate.

The pupil's care status will be considered as part of the wider context when responding to safeguarding concerns, but will not replace professional assessment of risk.

12. SEMH and Emotional Wellbeing

The Levett School recognises that pupils may require support with emotional regulation, relationships, self-esteem, anxiety, engagement and behaviour.

The school will take an individualised approach to SEMH and will not assume that every CiC or PLAC requires therapeutic intervention.

Support may include:

- trusted adult relationships;
- predictable routines;
- explicit teaching of emotional regulation;
- targeted SEMH intervention;
- pastoral support;
- restorative approaches;
- therapeutic or specialist advice;
- appropriate sensory or environmental adaptations; and
- support to develop independence and self-regulation.

Where appropriate, the school may use assessment tools such as Boxall Profiling alongside professional observation, pupil voice and other assessment information.

The school's SEMH Policy will provide further detail regarding universal, targeted and specialist support.

13. Behaviour, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

The Levett School will maintain high expectations for behaviour while recognising the individual circumstances and needs of Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children.

Where behaviour concerns arise, staff will consider:

- the pupil's individual needs;
- SEND;
- SEMH;
- known barriers to learning;
- safeguarding concerns;
- communication needs;
- previous educational experiences; and
- relevant care circumstances.

The school will seek to understand the underlying barriers to successful engagement and use appropriate support alongside clear and consistent expectations.

Any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be made in accordance with:

- the school's Behaviour Policy;
- statutory exclusion requirements; and
- current DfE guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion.

Where appropriate, the school will work with the social worker, Virtual School and other professionals when significant behaviour concerns arise.

The status of a pupil as CiC or PLAC will be considered as part of the pupil's individual circumstances but will not create an automatic exemption from the school's behaviour procedures.

14. Pupil Premium Plus

The school will use Pupil Premium Plus in accordance with the current DfE conditions of grant.

For Children in Care, the Virtual School Head is responsible for ensuring that Pupil Premium Plus is used to support the child's educational needs, in consultation with the school and linked to the child's PEP.

The Designated Teacher will provide relevant information about the pupil's needs, proposed provision and impact to support appropriate decisions regarding funding.

For Previously Looked-After Children, where The Levett School receives Pupil Premium Plus funding, the funding will be used in accordance with the current DfE conditions of grant and linked to identified educational need.

Funding will not be treated as an entitlement to an individual pupil or as a substitute for the school's statutory responsibilities.

Where funding is used to support an intervention, the school will consider:

- the identified need;
- the intended outcome;

- the intervention or provision;
- the cost;
- the timescale; and
- evidence of impact.

15. Voice of the Child

The Levett School will actively seek and consider the views, wishes and feelings of Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children.

Pupils will be supported to contribute to:

- PEPs;
- reviews;
- target setting;
- curriculum planning where appropriate;
- behaviour and SEMH planning;
- transition planning; and
- decisions about support.

Participation will be appropriate to the pupil's age, understanding and communication needs.

Where a pupil finds direct participation difficult, staff will use appropriate communication methods and information from trusted adults to ensure that the pupil's views are represented as accurately as possible.

The school will ensure that pupil voice is meaningful and is not simply recorded as a compliance exercise.

16. Working with Parents, Carers and Professionals

The school will work collaboratively with parents, those with parental responsibility, foster carers, residential staff, social workers, the Virtual School and other relevant professionals.

The school will:

- communicate appropriately with carers and relevant adults;
- provide information about educational progress;
- share relevant concerns;
- contribute to meetings and reviews;
- identify agreed actions and responsibilities;
- support consistency between home, care and education; and
- ensure appropriate information is transferred when circumstances change.

The school will respect legal arrangements relating to parental responsibility, delegated authority and contact.

Where there is uncertainty regarding who can make a particular decision, the school will seek appropriate advice rather than making assumptions.

17. Working with the Virtual School

The Levett School will maintain effective partnership working with the Doncaster Virtual School.

The school will:

- provide relevant educational information;
- contribute to PEPs;
- attend relevant meetings;
- seek advice where required;
- share information regarding progress and barriers;
- contribute to transition planning;
- identify training and support needs; and
- work collaboratively to improve educational outcomes.

The school recognises that the Virtual School Head has statutory responsibilities for promoting the educational achievement of children looked after by the local authority. The school will therefore work in partnership with, rather than duplicate, the role of the Virtual School.

Current Virtual School contact details will be maintained through the school's safeguarding and operational contact systems rather than relying on individual staff email addresses within this policy.

18. Transition and Reintegration

As a PRU, The Levett School recognises that successful transition is a key part of educational provision for Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children.

Transition planning will consider:

- the purpose and expected duration of the placement;
- educational progress;
- attendance;
- SEND;
- SEMH;
- behaviour and engagement;
- successful strategies and adaptations;
- safeguarding;
- pupil voice;
- aspirations;
- the receiving setting's ability to meet identified needs; and
- information required by the receiving setting.

Where a pupil is expected to return to a mainstream school or move to another educational setting, the school will support a planned transition.

The Designated Teacher will contribute to transition planning and ensure that relevant educational information is transferred securely and appropriately.

Where a pupil remains at The Levett School while longer-term provision is being secured, the school will continue to provide appropriate educational support while working with the relevant professionals to progress planning.

19. Information Sharing

Information relating to Children in Care and Previously Looked-After Children will be handled in accordance with:

- data protection legislation;
- safeguarding requirements;
- the school's Information Management procedures;
- relevant local authority procedures; and
- current statutory information-sharing guidance.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and where there is a lawful basis for doing so.

Data protection requirements will not prevent information being shared where this is necessary to safeguard and promote a child's welfare.

Staff will not disclose confidential information to other pupils or members of the wider school community.

Information will be transferred securely when a pupil changes educational placement.

20. Training and Staff Development

The school will ensure that the Designated Teacher receives appropriate training and has access to relevant advice and support.

Training will reflect the needs of the school and may include:

- the educational needs of Children in Care;
- the role of the Designated Teacher;
- PEPs;
- safeguarding;
- SEND;
- attendance;
- behaviour;
- SEMH;
- trauma-informed practice;
- attachment and relationships;
- educational transitions;
- information sharing; and
- Pupil Premium Plus.

Relevant information will be shared with staff through safeguarding training, briefings, professional development and individual pupil support arrangements.

The Designated Teacher will identify emerging training needs through monitoring of the cohort and review of pupil outcomes.

21. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of provision for CiC and PLAC will be monitored through the school's quality assurance processes.

The Designated Teacher will monitor, as appropriate:

- progress and attainment;
- attendance;
- behaviour and engagement;
- intervention impact;
- SEND provision;
- PEP completion and quality;
- pupil voice;
- safeguarding concerns;
- transition outcomes; and
- use and impact of relevant funding.

The Headteacher and senior leaders will use this information to identify strengths, areas for development and any actions required.

The Management Committee will receive appropriate cohort-level information to provide strategic challenge and oversight.

Individual pupil information will be shared with governors only where necessary and in accordance with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to:

- legislation;
- statutory guidance;
- local authority procedures;
- Virtual School arrangements; or
- the school's provision.

The policy will be approved by the Management Committee and made available through the school's usual policy arrangements.

Doncaster Virtual School exists to improve the educational outcomes of children in the care of Doncaster (CiC) as well as of previously looked after children (prev-CiC), those of Gypsy and Traveller (GT) ethnicity, those who are ethnic Roma (R), and other children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL), who are resident in the borough.

More information can be found here: <https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/virtual-school-for-children-and-young-people-in-care-education-service>

How to contact the Doncaster Virtual School - CiC Team

Please Note: Any communication from the Virtual School to schools or other agencies, services and professionals that refers to a child in care's personal details will be sent using the Doncaster Council policy described above.

Virtual school contact information

South and Central Team:

South Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Michelle.Wilson@doncaster.gov.uk

Central Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Marie.Volley@doncaster.gov.uk

North and East Team:

North Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Jane.Cartwright@doncaster.gov.uk

East Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Ceri.Foster@doncaster.gov.uk

Post-16 and Care Leavers Team:

Raising of Achievement Officer Gil.Burgess@doncaster.gov.uk

Raising of Achievement Officer Elizabeth.Wheeler@doncaster.gov.uk

Virtual School Manager:

Virtual School Manager Andrew.Bowling@doncaster.gov.uk

Virtual School Headteacher:

Jane.Cresswell@doncaster.gov.uk