



# METHERINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Policies, Procedures, Regulations and Guidance

<b>Document Title:</b>	Looked after Child Policy (Child in Care)	
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<b>Approved by:</b>	Full Governors	
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<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date Authorised</b>	<b>Summary of Key Changes</b>
1	May 2025	Dates and legislation links updated Child in Care (CiC) terminology change

# Looked After Children (Children in Care) Policy

## 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the approach taken by Metheringham Primary School to support the education, wellbeing, and safeguarding of Looked After Children (LAC), now referred to by Lincolnshire County Council as Children in Care (CiC). It aligns with current national legislation and Lincolnshire County Council guidance, ensuring that all children in care are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential in a safe, nurturing, and aspirational environment. It also recognises the needs of Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), who may face similar barriers to learning and require ongoing support.

## 2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children's Social Care National Framework 2023
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Human Rights Act 1998

## 3. Core Principles

At Metheringham Primary School, we recognise that children in care and previously looked after children (PLAC) may have experienced disrupted education, abuse, neglect, loss or separation. Our core principles include:

- High expectations and aspirations for all CiC
- Early intervention and targeted support
- Multi-agency collaboration
- Promoting inclusion and equality
- Respecting the voice and rights of the child

## 4. Responsibilities

### **Responsibility of the Headteacher**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children in Care, whose role is set out below.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Children in Care and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children in Care.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

### **Responsibility of the Governing Body:**

- Identify a nominated Governor for Children in Care.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children in Care.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

### **The Role of the Designated Teacher**

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen...[who] should be an advocate for Children in Care, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through our Looked After Children Education Adviser Team.

### Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.
- Co-ordinate any support for the Children in Care that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Encourage Children in Care to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.

- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.

### **The Responsibilities of All Staff**

#### **All our staff will:**

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children in Care, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Children in Care's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Children in Care to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Children in Care.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Children in Care.

## 5. Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

Children in care are more likely to face emotional and mental health challenges. We provide access to in-school pastoral support, referrals to CAMHS, and work with the LCC Child and Family Services' LAC team to ensure the holistic needs of children in care are met.

## 6. Safeguarding

Children in care are a priority group in all safeguarding procedures. All staff are trained to understand their additional vulnerabilities and how to respond to safeguarding concerns, in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## 7. Transitions and Post-16 Support

Support is offered through Key Stage transitions, and in preparing older children for independence. Our role includes coordination with the LCC Virtual School to ensure continuity of care and access to further education or training.

Information will be passed on to the receiving school within two weeks of transfer. This will include the ePEP, attainment and tracking data and any other information that will support a smooth and effective transition for the pupil.

If a pupil ceases to be looked after, their individual needs will still be catered for within the normal school provision and ongoing monitoring will be the responsibility of the designated teacher.

Advice and support is available from Lincolnshire Virtual School

## 8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with any major changes to local or national guidance. It is approved by the Headteacher and the Governing Body.

## Appendix: Useful Links and Contacts

- Lincolnshire Virtual School: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/virtualschool>
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding>
- Lincolnshire LAC Finance Handbook: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/social-care-health/leaving-care-looked-children-finance-handbook>
- Lincolnshire Children's Services Procedures Manual: <https://lincolnshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com>
- DfE: Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children (Statutory Guidance)
- DfE: Supporting Previously Looked-After Children in Education: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>