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A practical guide for Designated Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads supporting children known, or previously known, to children's social care

Purpose and how to use this guide

This guide supports schools to understand and implement their responsibilities for children known, or previously known, to children's social care, including:

- Children in Care
- Previously Children in Care
- Children with a Social Worker
- Ever 6 CWSW
- children in formal kinship care arrangements, where relevant

It is designed to help DTs, DSLs and school leaders distinguish between:

MUST	Required by statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations, legal duties or local safeguarding processes
SHOULD	Strongly recommended practice aligned with national guidance and Warwickshire Virtual School expectations that schools should consider using to improve attendance, inclusion, progress, wellbeing and safeguarding.
MAY	School-specific arrangements. Schools can use these prompts to record their own local approach, including named roles, review cycles, escalation routes, communication arrangements and governance oversight.

This guide is organised into two main sections:

- **Section 1: Children in Care and Previously Children in Care.** This section sets out the statutory Designated Teacher role, PEP expectations, PP+ considerations and governance requirements.
  Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children

- **Section 2: Children with a Social Worker and children in formal kinship care arrangements.** This section supports DSLs, CWSW leads and senior leaders to strengthen safeguarding, attendance, inclusion and multi-agency practice.
  DfE Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements

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Intention

This guide is intended to support schools to create a stable, inclusive and relationship-based environment where children known, or previously known, to children's social care can attend, feel safe, learn and make progress. It should be used alongside statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures and the school's own policies for safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, SEND and inclusion.

Schools should use this guide to strengthen practice in the following areas:

- staff understanding of trauma-informed, attachment-aware and relationship-based practice;
- the confidence of DTs, DSLs, CWSW/kinship leads, attendance leads, pastoral teams and SENCOs to recognise overlapping vulnerabilities and use appropriate escalation pathways;
- whole-school systems for safeguarding, attendance, inclusion, SEND and wellbeing;
- pupil, family and carer voice within planning and review;
- consistent and secure information-sharing so that children receive the right support at the right time.

Intended outcomes

Effective use of this guide should help schools evidence that:

- children are safe, included and able to attend school regularly;
- education is considered within safeguarding and multi-agency planning;
- barriers to learning are identified early and responded to through school systems;
- CiC have high-quality PEPs that inform teaching, support, intervention and PP+ use;
- CWSW and kinship cohorts are monitored appropriately through attendance, inclusion, safeguarding and governance systems;
- children and families are meaningfully involved in planning and review;
- behaviour that may communicate unmet need is understood alongside safeguarding, SEND, relational and contextual factors;
- leaders can evidence the impact of support, intervention, funding and partnership working.

Equality and Diversity

Schools should consider how protected characteristics, SEND, poverty, trauma, family stress and other adverse experiences may overlap. Support should be inclusive, ambitious and responsive to individual need, while ensuring that schools meet their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010.

Section 1: Children in Care (CiC) and Previously Children in Care (PCiC)

This section is for the Designated Teacher, headteacher, senior leaders and governors. It sets out the statutory expectations for Children in Care and Previously Children in Care and should be treated as the school's core non-negotiable provision for this cohort.

Schools MUST ensure that:

- there is a named Designated Teacher for CiC and PCiC with the appropriate status, training, time and access to senior leaders;
- Children in Care have high-quality Personal Education Plans that are reviewed termly and used to inform teaching, support and intervention;
- the school works with the relevant Virtual School, social worker, carers, parents and other professionals as appropriate;
- Pupil Premium Plus is used strategically and its impact is reviewed;
- governors receive anonymised information so they can hold leaders to account for attendance, progress, inclusion, wellbeing, safeguarding and use of funding.

Schools SHOULD: • promote high aspirations • ensure CiC and PCiC are considered within whole-school policy and practice • seek pupil and carer voice • provide staff with appropriate advice and training • ensure support is reviewed for impact.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • Named Designated Teacher for CiC/PCiC • Named governor/trustee with oversight for CiC/PCiC • PEP preparation, attendance and review arrangements • PP+ planning, spending and impact review arrangements • Staff briefing, training and information-sharing arrangements • Governance reporting cycle and anonymised monitoring arrangements	*Insert school response*

Section 2: Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) and formal kinship care

For the purposes of this guide, CWSW includes children who currently have, or have had within the past six years, a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare concerns. This includes children subject to Child in Need or Child Protection planning, Ever 6 CWSW and, where known to the school, children in formal kinship care arrangements.

This section is primarily for the DSL, CWSW/kinship lead, attendance lead, SENCO, pastoral leads and senior leaders. It does not create a school-level PEP process for CWSW or kinship cohorts. Instead, it sets out the core expectations that should sit alongside existing safeguarding, attendance, SEND, inclusion and pastoral systems.

For CWSW and children in formal kinship care, MUST expectations arise through safeguarding duties, attendance duties, SEND and Equality Act duties, local safeguarding procedures and any existing statutory or multi-agency plan. They do not create a separate statutory PEP process for this cohort.

Schools MUST ensure that:

- safeguarding information is managed appropriately;
- attendance, suspension, exclusion and children missing education concerns are considered through a safeguarding lens;
- education is considered within CP, CIN, Early Support and other multi-agency planning in line with local safeguarding processes where relevant;
- information is shared on a proportionate, need-to-know basis.

Schools SHOULD: • identify a named lead • review cohort attendance, inclusion and outcomes • build lived experience into review and support planning • access Virtual School advice, training and resources where appropriate.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • senior oversight arrangements • how CWSW/kinship status is identified, recorded and reviewed • attendance monitoring, review cycle and escalation route • how emerging inclusion risks are identified and escalated • SEND, SEMH and inclusion review arrangements	*Insert school response*

• how views are gathered, recorded and revisited over time • Transition planning for key points of change • where staff can access agreed CWSW/kinship guidance and resources • Governance reporting cycle and anonymised monitoring arrangements	

Appendix A provides partnership-working and operational prompts for admissions, attendance, SEND, wellbeing, behaviour, alternative provision, reduced timetables, CME/EHE, safeguarding, transitions, governance and Virtual School engagement.

Appendix A: Partnership working and operational prompts

Admissions and transitions into school

Schools MUST:

- follow the School Admissions Code;
- prioritise CiC and PCiC appropriately;
- transfer safeguarding and education information securely and promptly;
- clarify parental responsibility, consent and communication arrangements for children in formal kinship care;
- involve the relevant Virtual School for CiC/PCiC in line with statutory guidance and local arrangements;
- ensure any immediate safeguarding or multi-agency concerns are identified and acted on during admission.

Schools SHOULD: • identify children known, or previously known, to children's social care sensitively during admission or transition • review whether enhanced transition support is needed • involve relevant professionals early where admission may require additional planning.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • admissions checklists • admission transition meeting arrangements	*Insert school response*

• named transition leads • how key admission information is shared with staff appropriately.	

Attendance

Schools MUST:

All cohorts:

- follow Working together to improve school attendance and safeguarding procedures;
- identify and respond to unexplained, persistent or severe absence;
- consider absence through a safeguarding lens;
- involve relevant partners where concerns escalate;
- ensure attendance support plans are developed, reviewed and escalated in line with Working together to improve school attendance and local procedures.

CiC/PCiC:

- ensure attendance concerns for CiC are discussed through the PEP process and shared with the relevant Virtual School where concerns escalate.

CWSW/kinship:

- ensure attendance concerns are considered within safeguarding, CP, CIN, Early Support or wider multi-agency planning where relevant.

Schools SHOULD: • review attendance patterns for this cohort • consider barriers linked to trauma, SEND, family stress, placement change or caring responsibilities • use pupil and family voice to inform support.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • attendance review, escalation and partner communication processes.	*Insert school response*

Additional educational needs and SEND

Schools MUST:

- meet Equality Act and SEND duties for all cohorts;

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- use the graduated approach where SEND or additional needs are identified, including consideration of reasonable adjustments;
- coordinate and review plans with relevant professionals;
- ensure CiC SEND needs are reflected in the PEP where appropriate;
- ensure CWSW/kinship needs are considered within safeguarding, SEND and multi-agency planning.

Schools SHOULD: • maintain high expectations • prioritise timely assessment and support • review the overlap between social care, SEND, attendance and behaviour • monitor interventions for impact.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • SENCO review and intervention monitoring cycles • use of pupil premium or other funding streams • how EHCP reviews link to wider school and multi-agency planning.	*Insert school response*

Alternative provision, off-site direction and managed moves

Schools MUST:

- remain accountable for pupils on roll;
- ensure any AP or off-site direction is safe, suitable, quality assured and regularly reviewed;
- monitor attendance and safeguarding;
- involve the relevant Virtual School for CiC/PCiC;
- consider safeguarding, SEND, attendance and multi-agency implications for CWSW/kinship AP or off-site arrangements in line with school and local safeguarding procedures.

Schools SHOULD: • ensure AP contributes to a clear education plan • is not used to avoid exclusion or unmanaged drift out of school	*Insert school response*

• includes a named school lead who monitors attendance, learning, wellbeing and reintegration.	
Schools MAY record: • quality assurance and review schedules for each placement • named AP monitoring role and responsibilities • reintegration planning arrangements.	*Insert school response*

Behaviour, relational practice, suspensions and exclusions

Schools MUST:

- follow statutory guidance on behaviour, suspension and permanent exclusion, including Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement;
- consider safeguarding, SEND and Equality Act duties before decisions are made;
- contact the relevant Virtual School as soon as possible where a CiC is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion;
- consider whether behaviour concerns indicate unmet safeguarding, SEND or Equality Act duties, and act in line with statutory behaviour guidance, suspension and permanent exclusion guidance and safeguarding procedures.

Schools SHOULD: • use relational and trauma-informed approaches • identify unmet need early • use assessment-plan-do-review cycles • consider reasonable adjustments • seek multi-agency advice where needed • plan reintegration carefully after suspension, AP or prolonged absence.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • internal alternatives to suspension • behaviour review processes • reintegration templates • how reasonable adjustments are considered before behaviour decisions	*Insert school response*

• when pastoral, SEND, safeguarding or external advice should be sought • named senior leaders responsible for oversight.	

Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education

Schools MUST:

- follow Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools, and Warwickshire Children missing from education (CME) procedures, where a pupil's whereabouts, education access or placement is unclear;
- apply additional scrutiny before removing a child known, or previously known, to children's social care from roll;
- seek advice from the relevant Virtual School for CiC/PCiC where appropriate;
- respond to missing education for CWSW/kinship pupils as a potential safeguarding concern.

Schools SHOULD: • check whether social care, attendance services, SENDAR, the Virtual School or another local authority needs to be involved • offer a meeting where parents or carers indicate a wish to electively home educate.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • CME referral processes • EHE response processes • internal roll-removal checklists • who completes pre-removal safeguarding checks.	*Insert school response*

Mental health, wellbeing, pupil and family voice

Schools MUST:

- respond to wellbeing and safeguarding concerns in line with school procedures;
- ensure concerns are recorded, shared and acted on appropriately;
- reflect CiC wellbeing and voice within the PEP where appropriate;
- seek and use pupil, family and kinship carer views to inform support and planning where required by statutory or multi-agency planning processes.

Schools SHOULD: • use a graduated approach to assess and meet social, emotional and mental health needs • seek pupil and family or kinship carer voice • avoid asking children to repeatedly retell difficult experiences • include CWSW and kinship cohorts in whole-school wellbeing strategy.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • trusted adult approaches • pupil voice tools • family or kinship carer communication processes • wellbeing support pathways.	*Insert school response*

Reduced timetables

Schools MUST:

- ensure any reduced or part-time timetable is exceptional, time-limited, reviewed regularly, agreed with parents or carers, monitored as a safeguarding and attendance concern, and supported by a clear reintegration plan;
- involve the relevant Virtual School for CiC/PCiC;
- involve social care, SEND or attendance services for CWSW/kinship pupils where relevant.

Schools SHOULD: • record the rationale, safeguards and review arrangements • ensure the arrangement does not become a long-term substitute for full-time education.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • reduced timetable approval processes • review frequency • reintegration templates • who authorises and reviews the arrangement.	*Insert school response*

Safeguarding and information sharing

Schools MUST:

- follow the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education and Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Procedures;
- record concerns securely;
- share information appropriately on a need-to-know basis;
- ensure CiC/PCiC information supports statutory education planning without unnecessary disclosure;
- ensure CWSW/kinship information is used proportionately to inform safeguarding, attendance, inclusion and multi-agency planning.

Schools SHOULD: • brief relevant staff only on what they need to know to support the child • avoid unnecessary disclosure of social care or kinship status • ensure education is considered within CP, CIN, Early Support and multi-agency planning.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • how information is shared securely and proportionately • staff briefing processes • safeguarding escalation routes • where sensitive social care or kinship information is recorded.	*Insert school response*

Transitions

Schools MUST:

- ensure transition planning builds on information already shared at admission or previous review points;
- plan additional support where transition may increase safeguarding, SEND or inclusion risk, in line with school duties and local procedures;
- ensure CiC/PCiC transition planning is linked to the PEP and relevant Virtual School;
- consider CWSW/kinship transition concerns through safeguarding and multi-agency systems.

Schools SHOULD: • review whether enhanced transition planning is needed for Reception or Nursery entry, Year 2 to 3, Year 6 to 7, mid-year admissions, return from suspension or AP, prolonged absence, placement or kinship arrangement change, post-16 transition, or change of social care status.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • enhanced transition offers • named transition leads • key information to transfer at each transition point • school visit arrangements • trusted adult processes • peer support arrangements.	*Insert school response*

Governance monitoring

Schools MUST:

- ensure governors or trustees receive appropriate anonymised information so they can hold leaders to account for:
    - CiC/PCiC provision;
    - PEP quality;
    - PP+ planning, use and impact;
    - attendance, progress, inclusion, wellbeing and safeguarding outcomes for CiC/PCiC.

Schools SHOULD report on: • attendance, persistent and severe absence • suspensions and exclusions • reduced timetables • AP use • attainment and progress • SEND overlap • transition risks • pupil and family voice • staff training • CWSW/kinship safeguarding, attendance, inclusion and multi-agency practice where this can be reported appropriately	*Insert school response*

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• impact of interventions.	
Schools MAY record: • governor reporting cycles • named link governors or trustees • anonymised dashboard formats • review questions used by governors.	*Insert school response*

Warwickshire Virtual School

Schools MUST:

- work with the relevant Virtual School for CiC and PCiC, including through the PEP process and where suspension, exclusion, AP, attendance or placement concerns arise.

Schools SHOULD: • use Warwickshire Virtual School's strategic advice, training and resources for CWSW and children in formal kinship care arrangements where this would strengthen attendance, inclusion, safeguarding, transition or multi-agency planning.	*Insert school response*
Schools MAY record: • local routes for statutory CiC/PCiC support and CWSW/kinship strategic advice, including who liaises with the Virtual School.	*Insert school response*

- **Email:** *virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk*
- **Phone:** 01926 742018
- **Website:** *Warwickshire Virtual School*

For pupils looked after by another local authority we may seek information and advice from their Virtual School.

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Blank School Policy Template: Local Arrangements for Supporting Children Known, or Previously Known, to Children's Social Care

Using this template *[remove this section after completing policy]*

Schools should use the MUST, SHOULD and MAY prompts in Appendix A to complete each relevant section of this policy template. MUST statements should be reflected in the school's policy where they apply. SHOULD statements can be used to strengthen recommended practice. MAY prompts can be used to record local arrangements, named roles, review cycles, escalation routes and evidence used by leaders and governors.

Important note: *This template is not a standalone statutory policy unless completed and adapted. Schools should align it with their safeguarding and child protection, attendance, SEND, behaviour, equality, alternative provision and local safeguarding procedures.*

School name: [Insert school name]

Policy owner	[Insert name/role]
Approved by	[Insert governing board/trust committee]
Date approved	[Insert date]
Review date	[Insert date]

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how [insert school name] supports children known, or previously known, to children's social care, including Children in Care, Previously Children in Care, Children with a Social Worker, Ever 6 CWSW and children in formal kinship care arrangements where relevant.

2. Policy aims

- Ensure children are safe, included and able to attend school regularly.
- Promote high aspirations, progress and wellbeing.
- Ensure education is considered within safeguarding and multi-agency planning where relevant.
- Use pupil, family and carer views appropriately to inform support and review.
- Ensure leaders and governors can monitor impact and hold practice to account.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Named person/arrangement
Designated Teacher for CiC/PCiC	[Insert]
Designated Safeguarding Lead	[Insert]
CWSW/kinship lead	[Insert]
Attendance lead	[Insert]
SENCO	[Insert]
Named governor/trustee	[Insert]

4. Children in Care and Previously Children in Care

[Use Section 1 and the relevant Appendix A prompts to complete this section. Describe how the school meets statutory Designated Teacher responsibilities, supports PEP quality, works with the relevant Virtual School, uses Pupil Premium Plus, identifies named leads, reviews impact and reports anonymised information to governors.]

5. Children with a Social Worker and formal kinship care

[Use Section 2 and the relevant Appendix A prompts to complete this section. Describe how the school identifies, records and reviews support for CWSW and children in formal kinship care, including safeguarding, attendance, SEND, inclusion, wellbeing, multi-agency planning, named lead arrangements, review cycles and escalation routes. This section should not create a PEP process for CWSW/kinship cohorts.]

6. Admissions and transitions into school

[Use the Admissions and transitions into school prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Set out how the school identifies children known, or previously known, to children's social care during admission or transition, transfers safeguarding and education information securely, clarifies parental responsibility and communication arrangements, identifies named transition leads, and records review or escalation arrangements where enhanced transition support is needed.]

7. Attendance

[Use the Attendance prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Describe how the school monitors attendance for these cohorts, identifies barriers, responds to unexplained, persistent or severe absence, uses a safeguarding lens, escalates concerns, records review cycles, identifies named attendance leads, and links

attendance support to PEP, CP, CIN, Early Support or other multi-agency planning where relevant.]

8. Additional educational needs and SEND

[Use the Additional educational needs and SEND prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Explain how the school identifies additional educational needs, uses the graduated approach, considers reasonable adjustments, links SEND planning to social care and safeguarding information, reflects CiC SEND needs in the PEP where appropriate, specifies SENCO review cycles, records evidence of support and reviews impact.]

9. Alternative provision, off-site direction and managed moves

[Use the Alternative provision, off-site direction and managed moves prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Describe how the school remains accountable for pupils on roll, quality assures AP or off-site direction, monitors attendance, safeguarding, learning and wellbeing, identifies the named AP monitoring role, records review schedules and escalation routes, involves the Virtual School for CiC/PCiC, considers safeguarding/SEND/multi-agency implications for CWSW/kinship pupils, and plans reintegration.]

10. Behaviour, relational practice, suspensions and exclusions

[Use the Behaviour, relational practice, suspensions and exclusions prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Set out how the school uses relational, trauma-informed and inclusive approaches, considers safeguarding, SEND and Equality Act duties before behaviour decisions, identifies named senior oversight, records review and reintegration processes, involves the Virtual School where a CiC is at risk of suspension or exclusion, and evidences how reasonable adjustments and external advice are considered.]

11. Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education

[Use the Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Explain how the school follows local CME procedures, applies additional scrutiny before removing a child known, or previously known, to children's social care from roll, records named responsibility for pre-removal safeguarding checks, identifies escalation routes, seeks Virtual School advice for CiC/PCiC where appropriate, and responds to missing education for CWSW/kinship pupils as a potential safeguarding concern.]

12. Mental health, wellbeing, pupil and family voice

[Use the Mental health, wellbeing, pupil and family voice prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Describe how the school responds to wellbeing and safeguarding concerns, records and shares concerns appropriately, gathers pupil, family and carer views without requiring repeated retelling of difficult experiences, identifies wellbeing support pathways, records evidence of support and review, and includes these cohorts within whole-school wellbeing strategy.]

13. Reduced timetables

[Use the Reduced timetables prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Set out how the school ensures any reduced or part-time timetable is exceptional, time-limited, agreed with parents or carers, reviewed regularly, authorised by a named senior leader, monitored as a safeguarding and attendance concern, supported by a reintegration plan, recorded with clear evidence and linked to Virtual School, social care, SEND or attendance services where relevant.]

14. Safeguarding and information sharing

[Use the Safeguarding and information sharing prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Explain how safeguarding information is recorded securely, shared proportionately and used on a need-to-know basis. Include how relevant staff are briefed, how unnecessary disclosure is avoided, where sensitive information is recorded, who is responsible for escalation, and how education is considered within CP, CIN, Early Support and other multi-agency planning.]

15. Transitions

[Use the Transitions prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Describe how the school plans for key transition points including Reception/Nursery entry, Year 2 to 3, Year 6 to 7, mid-year admissions, return from suspension or AP, prolonged absence, placement or kinship arrangement change, post-16 transition, or change of social care status. Include named transition leads, information transfer arrangements, review points, escalation routes and evidence used to plan support.]

16. Governance, monitoring and review

[Use the Governance monitoring prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Set out how governors or trustees receive appropriate anonymised information, how leaders review attendance, inclusion, safeguarding, SEND, behaviour and wellbeing data, how the impact of support is evaluated, what evidence is reported, who reports it, and the governance reporting cycle.]

17. Virtual School engagement

[Use the Warwickshire Virtual School prompts in Appendix A to complete this section. Set out how the school works with the relevant Virtual School for CiC and PCiC, including through the PEP process and where suspension, exclusion, AP, attendance or placement concerns arise. Explain who liaises with the Virtual School, how advice is recorded and shared, and how the school uses Warwickshire Virtual School's strategic advice, training and resources for CWSW and children in formal kinship care arrangements where appropriate.]

18. Linked policies and guidance

- Alternative provision
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools
- Elective home education
- Equality information and objectives
- Keeping children safe in education
- Off-site direction and managed moves procedures
- Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension
- Reduced timetable procedures
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- School Admissions Code
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement
- Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Warwickshire Virtual School guidance and resources
- Warwickshire Children missing from education (CME)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance