



The Cowplain School

Work hard. Enjoy learning. Achieve highly.

Looked After Children Policy

Adopted: Summer 2025

Review date: Summer 2026

Section 1

1.1.1 Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to ensure that The Cowplain School:

- Provides a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Supports the school's looked after children to make academic progress at least in line with their peers.
- Supports the school's looked after children and gives them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- Supports the school's looked after children emotionally with the changes they may experience, such as changes of placement, changes of social worker etc.
- Fulfils the schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, by asking the question, **'Would this be good enough for my child?'**

1.1.2 The Cowplain School will therefore:

- Prioritise education.
- Promote attendance.
- Target support.
- Have high expectations.
- Promote inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieve stability and continuity.
- Intervene early and prioritise action.
- Listen to children.
- Promote health and wellbeing.
- Reduce exclusions and promote stability.
- Work in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

1.2 Looked After Children (LAC)

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. Looked after children fall into four main groups:

- a) Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- b) Children who are the subject of a full care order or interim care order;
- c) Children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- d) Children who are compulsorily accommodated.

1.3 Rationale

Children in care perform less well academically than any other group of children. Therefore, improving outcomes for children in care is a vital priority. There are around 84,000 children in care in England at any one time although it is a rapidly changing group as they move in and out of care. These children are taken into care for their own protection but once in care many do not receive a quality learning experience. The gap in attainment between these children and all other children is wide. The Virtual School Team in Hampshire works on narrowing this gap through rigorous tracking and intervention where necessary, working closely with social workers and schools and by using one to one tuition.

Research reveals that the day-to-day support from a teacher continues to be the key determinant of success. The Cowplain School believes this starts with quality first teaching.

The Designated teacher has a statutory role within the school and is responsible for developing and reviewing the education progress of the child and in partnership with others, helping them to achieve and enjoy.

The Cowplain School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of Looked After Children and expects the school community to share this commitment.

Section 2

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare and achievement of Looked After Children. There are, however, key people within school and the LA who have specific responsibilities for the current school year (2023-24) are:

- The Virtual School
- The Principal – Mr Ian Gates
- The Designated Teacher (DT) – Dr I Clarke and Mr J Peters
- The School Matron – Mrs Serena Williams
- Designated Looked After Children Trustee – Mr Steve Head

2.1.1 The role of the Designated Teacher

The DT will work closely with the School Matron to:

- Maintain an up to date record of all Looked After Children who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEN Code of Practice – School Action/School Action Plus where appropriate
 - Child Protection information when appropriate.
 - Baseline information and all test results.
 - Attendance figures
 - Exclusions
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each child to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Education Health and Care plans, and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.
- Ensure that a member of staff attends Children's Services Reviews on behalf of each child and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with the Hampshire, or another, Virtual School on a regular basis regarding the performance, attendance and attainment of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Apply to the Virtual School to obtain funding to support the academic progress of Looked After Children, and to monitor the impact of this funding.
- Act as a source of advice for all staff about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that Looked After Children, along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of Looked After Children.
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of suspension;
 - Contact the Virtual School as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid suspensions
 - Working with the Virtual School and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour.
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from Hampshire Virtual School on avoiding exclusion.
- Report to the Academy Trust annually on the performance of the looked after children who are on the roll of the school with the following information:
 - The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - The number of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.

- The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

2.1.2 The responsibility of all staff is to:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all students.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a student'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 Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's Anti-Bullying policy.

2.1.3 The role of the Academy Trust:

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

Section 3

3.1 Operating this policy:

In order to operate this policy, the school will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate an Academy Trustee to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher and School Counsellor in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Looked After Children.

Section 4

4.1 Government Policy/Guidance:

- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Children and Young Person's Act 2008
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.
- The County Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).

- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors),

4.2 Appendices

Appendix 1: HCC Children in Care Pledge

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy

- Staff/Trustee training will be recorded and monitored to ensure that key staff/Trustees keep abreast of current legislation.
- Staff awareness training will be undertaken each year. For new staff and staff arriving mid-year, LAC training will be included within the Induction Programme.
- The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated as part of the school's / Trustees' review cycle.

4.4 Review of Policy

The Looked After Children Policy will be reviewed annually by the Academy Trust. An earlier review will be undertaken if there is a change to government or Local Authority legislation.

4.5 Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies and procedures in school. These include:

Anti-Bullying Policy
Attendance Policy
Behaviour Policy
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Single Equality Plan and Equalities Objectives
Exclusion Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy

A copy of the School's Looked After Children Policy is available online at www.cowplainschool.co.uk

Date Reviewed and approved:	Summer 2025	Reviewed by:	ICE	Next Review:	Summer 2026
Summary of changes made:	Removal of specific references to Hampshire Virtual school; replaced with Virtual School as we have worked with as many as 5 local authorities.				

APPENDIX 1

HCC CHILDREN IN CARE PLEDGE

Within your school you will probably have at least one child who is in care, whether it is in a children's home or in foster care. This children in care pledge outlines Hampshire's commitment to ensure that children looked after and care leavers have equal access to a range of key services and support wherever they live, go to school or access employment or training opportunities in Hampshire. Indeed this is something that we would want for all our young people.

Young people who live in the care of Hampshire County Council and care leavers were invited to contribute their experiences and identify the issues that matter to them most, and this living document was created because of the consultation and discussions on these issues. Is your school supporting children in care?

Your health – we will:

- help you to access health services, e.g. doctors, dentists, counselling, etc.
- support you in being healthy, both physically and mentally
- support you in identifying and taking part in positive activities, interests and hobbies.

Your education – we will:

- not make you feel different at school, e.g. taking you out of a class for a meeting, paying for you to go on trips, etc.
- support you in accessing academic and non-academic opportunities, not just school or college, e.g. apprenticeships, NVQs, other qualifications and job opportunities
- involve you in decisions made about your education and when additional help is needed why this is necessary
- involve you in decisions around your individual budget
- support you to access the college/university of your choice, should this be something you wish to do.

Your placement – we will:

- where possible, try to find you a placement with your siblings
- support you in transitions from placement to placement
- make better long-term plans for you, not just quick fixes
- find you a foster carer that suits you and meets your needs
- involve you in your placement planning
- keep you informed, where appropriate, about contact arrangements and how and when this can happen.

Your voice – we will:

- be contactable through a variety of ways and get back to you within 24 hours
- make time for you to talk one-to-one with us on your own
- be open and honest about your care and support you when changes are made
- encourage your participation in your care plan and other plans related to your care
- listen to your complaints and act on them as soon as is possible
- make information available to you, so you know your entitlements and rights.

Leaving care – we will:

- provide you with support if you feel you need it
- not kick you out on your 18th birthday
- provide and support you in building the skills to live on your own
- help you find somewhere to live and make sure you have everything you need

- give you information about your entitlements and support you in accessing them.

Your future – we will:

- help you plan for your future, as a good parent should
- support and help you build the life skills needed to become an adult
- not judge you based on how you have acted in the past, but who you are now
- encourage you to be the very best you can be
- support and help you in achieving your goals
- always be there to support you, even when you make mistakes.