



Children in Our Care Policy

SCHOOL POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Children in Our Care Policy

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Children in Our Care Policy

Aims

The main aims of this **Children in Our Care Policy** at Talbot House Children's Charity ("the Charity" and / or "the School") is to ensure staff:

- Promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children in Our Care
- Provide a safe and secure environment where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Ensure that Charity policies and procedures are followed for Children in Our Care as for all children.
- Ensure that all Children in Our Care have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that Children in Our Care take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of Children in Our Care by the Home Local Authority (HLA) are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensure that Children in Our Care are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.
- Fulfil their role as corporate parents with regard to Children in Our Care.

The Charity has an identified Designated Teacher for Children in Our Care (Stacy Murray, Deputy Head Teacher). We also have an identified Trustee / Governor with special responsibility for Children in Our Care (Trudy Johnson).

We are committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

This policy statement includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children in Our Care under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of Children in Our Care and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our **Children in Our Care Policy** reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Board of Trustees and Governing Body ("the Board") will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Children in Our Care.

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1. Rationale

Children in Our Care are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers, which can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer Children in Our Care progress to Higher Education (HE) and follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'cared for' by their Home Local Authority (HLA) if they are in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20 of the Children Act).
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31 of the Children Act) or interim care order (section 38 of the Children Act).
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46 of the Children Act).
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to Together for Children or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21 of the Children Act).

- 1.1 The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are 'cared for' on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by their HLA under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.
- 1.2 All these groups are said to be Children in Our Care. Children in Our Care who attend School may be 'cared for' by their HLA.

2. Allocation of Resources

The Board will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for Children in Our Care, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The Charity will work in partnership with the LS Virtual School for Children in Our Care to ensure that Children in Our Care receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

- The Designated Teacher at the Charity will:
 - Be an advocate for Children in Our Care.
 - Be proactive in identifying ways in which their school can raise attainment of Children in Our Care
 - Work in partnership with the HLA Virtual School, provide termly progress data on the progress of Children in Our Care.
 - Know all the Children in Our Care in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record keeping systems as required.
 - Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Children in Our Care, seeking advice from the HLA Virtual Schools.

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- Ensure that Children in Our Care receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- Ensure that all Children in Our Care have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan.
- Arrange and contribute to PEP Review meetings.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals.
- Monitor the targets set out in the PEP.
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Children in Our Care is experiencing difficulties or is a risk of exclusion.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Children in Our Care transfers to another educational placement.
- Report to the Board on Children in Our Care in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development.
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events.
- Prepare reports for Board meetings to include: the number of Children in Our Care on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
- Attend Local Academy Committee meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Children in Our Care.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENDco and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.
- Employees will:
 - Positively promote the raising of a Children in Our Care's self-esteem.
 - Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Children in Our Care.
 - Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Children in Our Care's progress.
 - Ensure any Children in Our Care is supported sensitively, and that confidentiality is maintained.
 - Follow school procedures.
 - Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Children in Our Care and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
 - Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a Children in Our Care is experiencing difficulties
 - Work in partnership with the HLA Virtual School, and other agencies to prevent a Children in Our Care's behaviour leading to an official exclusion and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement.
 - Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
 - Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher, the child's HLA Virtual School for Children in Our Care and professionals / parents / carers / pupil as appropriate.

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- The Board will:
 - Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise Children in Our Care by Together for Children according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice.
 - ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Children in Our Care.
 - Identify a member of the Board with special responsibility for Children in Our Care.
 - Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
 - In the event of an exclusion, ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meeting of the Children in Our Care.
- The HLA for Children will:
 - Provide a Virtual Head Teacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Children in Our Care.
 - Provide a specialist team to provide a wrap-around service for Children in Our Care.
 - Ensure that Children in Our Care receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible.
 - Ensure that every Children in Our Care has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care.
 - Make sure that each Children in Our Care has a PEP according to local and national guidance.
 - Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate.
 - Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible.
 - Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer.

3.1 The Charity will champion the needs of Children in Our Care, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest possible level.

4. Monitoring the Progress of Children in Our Care

All Children in Our Care will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the School, the child, the Child's Social Worker which will identify the child's individual needs and the support that they require.

- PEPs will be reviewed every 6 months.

5. Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know all the Children in Our Care and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, HLA Virtual School specialist staff, teacher / support worker and social worker.

- The status of Children in Our Care is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

6. Partnership with Parents / Carers and Care Workers

The Charity believes in individual schools developing a strong partnership with parents / carers and care workers to enable Children in Our Care to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being.

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6.1 Links with external agencies/organisations

The Charity recognises the important contribution that external support services make in supporting Children in Our Care. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual Children in Our Care:

- Social Care Workers / Community Care Workers / Residential Childcare Workers.
- Sunderland Virtual School for CLS.
- Other Virtual Schools for Children in Our Care from other LAs.
- Educational Psychologists and others from SEN services.
- Medical Officers, School Nurses.
- CAMHS.
- Education Welfare Officers.
- Youth Offending Service.

7. Review

The Head Teacher will review this policy every 3 years, or as required due to changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education, legal requirements, or as deemed necessary.