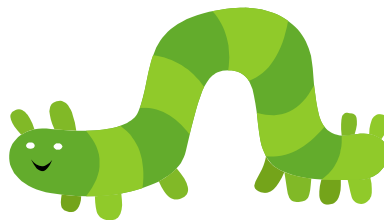




and



Abbots Farm Preschool

Children in Care Policy

October 2025

Review by October 2026

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Statement of intent

Abbots Farm Infant School and Abbots Farm Preschool provides a happy, safe, stimulating learning environment where we build strong foundations. We empower our children to have high aspirations and develop skills to continue to be successful at school and in the community.

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Children in Care (CiC) and Previously Children in Care (PCiC) are of real concern. Children who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

We endeavour to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our children.

Our aims are:

Standards

To encourage our children to reach the highest standards of which they are capable and to make good progress from what they are already able to do.

Quality

To ensure our children enjoy teaching of a high quality and enjoy a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.

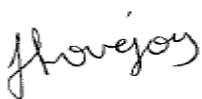

Efficiency

To plan realistically and to use the school's resources efficiently in order to ensure the school meets the needs of our children.

Ethos

- To promote a positive approach in all aspects of school life.
- To help our children develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.
- To encourage good standards in all relationships in the school.

Signed by:

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------|
|  | Headteacher | Date: 16/9/25 |
|  | Chair of governors | Date: 16/9/25 |

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2024) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children 2023'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Arrangements
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy

2. Definitions

“Child in Care (CiC)” are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the Local Authority (LA) has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

“Previously Children in care (PCiC)” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for children in care and previously children in care.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the Headteacher in her role as designated teacher for children in care and previously children in care has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each child in care's:
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents, or those with parental responsibility.
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep children in care and previously children in care safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst children in care and previously children in care.
- Ensuring children in care and previously children in care have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the termly progress data of children in care in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

The Virtual School Head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's children in care, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to children in care and previously children in care.
- Working with the school to ensure all children in care are in attendance and are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for children in care.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously children in care as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) for children in care.

- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the children in care who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
 - Ensure social workers, schools and designated teachers, understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's Personal Education Plan (PEP).
 - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all children in care.
 - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
 - Ensure the education achievement of children in care is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of children in care through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for children in care and previously children in care.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing body termly on the following:
 - The number of children in care and previously children in care in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of children in care and previously children in care, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting children in care is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for previously children in care is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of children in care.

The Headteacher as designated teacher for children in care and previously children in care is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available children in care and previously children in care.
- Promoting the educational achievement of children in care and previously children in care at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring children in care are involved in setting their own targets.

- Advising staff on teaching strategies for children in care.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Being aware of any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise children in care and previously children in care due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Submitting an annual report to the governing body, which details the progress of all children in care and previously children in care.

The Headteacher as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of a child in care's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding children in care and previously children in care as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.

The SENCO is responsible for supporting the Headteacher in:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEPs and care plans for children in care.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of a previously children in care.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of children in care and previously children in care and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards children in care and previously children in care.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding children in care and previously children in care due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of children in care and previously children in care.
- Ensuring all that is practicable is done to raise the attainment of children in care, including ensuring:
 - Pupils are following appropriate curriculum.
 - Targets are clear and feedback is given on at least a termly basis.
 - Where pupils are underachieving, ensuring intervention strategies are put in place.
 - Pupils are entered for all relevant tests unless it is wholly inappropriate.
 - Pupils are provided with all possible individual assistance in developing their basic literacy, reading and numeracy skills.

- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) receive all possible support to meet their needs.
- Suitable support is provided during times of transition both to a new class and new setting.
- Interventions take place if pupils fall behind on homework.

Teaching Assistants (TAs) will:

- Not discriminate or harass any other pupil or staff member on the grounds of being children in care.
- Be aware of children in care in their classes and provide them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision and positive discrimination.
- Preserve confidentiality and show sensitivity and understanding.
- Be aware that 60% of children in care say they are bullied and be vigilant of the signs.
- Promote the self-esteem of children in care.
- Respond positively if a child in care requests them to be their member of staff they can talk to.

4. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

All children in care must have a care plan: PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The PEP will be reviewed termly.

The school, with other professionals and the child's carers, will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- Access to preschool provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for KS1.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities and leisure interests.

The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a Children in care or previously children in care's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.

Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

5. Working with agencies and the Virtual School Head (VSH)

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the child in care's social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The school will coordinate their review meetings with the allocated social worker.

The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action to safeguard children in care and children previously in care.

Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

The designated teacher for children in care and previously children in care will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.

Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.

PP+ for previously children in care will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of children in care, or previously children in care, and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding children in care who are absent without authorisation.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of children in care and previously children in care.

6. Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of children in care and previously children in care will receive a range of appropriate training, including:

- School admissions arrangements
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework

- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education
- Safeguarding

All training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep children in care and previously children in care safe.

7. Safeguarding

The school recognises that many looked-after children and previously-looked-after children have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practised in observing and identifying these indicators amongst children in care and previously children in care as soon as possible.

Where a children in care and previously children in care has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of children in care and previously children in care can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have for children in care and previously children in care in line with the processes outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child in care or a child previously in care is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the school will collaborate in the multi-agency strategy discussion where appropriate to determine the pupil's welfare and plan rapid further action as necessary. The school's representative at any strategy discussion meetings will be sufficiently senior, skilled and experienced, and authorised to make decisions on the school's behalf. Information and analysis about the pupil and their family will be provided as required.

Staff will be regularly reminded to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a children in care and previously children in care is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8. Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Children in care and previously children in care are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact such issues can have on children in care and previously children in care, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst children in care and previously children in care may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with children in care and previously children in care are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

The school uses Leuven scales half-termly and will complete Boxall Profiles if needed. These may be used to support a social worker's assessment.

The Headteacher will promote the wellbeing and mental health of children in care and previously children in care.

9. Suspension and exclusions

Past experiences of children in care and previously children in care will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance '[Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#)' and recognises that suspending or excluding looked-after children can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides. The headteacher will balance this recognition alongside the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all staff and pupils, devising strategies that take both into consideration.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a child in care to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

As part of the termly review of a child's PEP, any concerns about their behaviour will be recorded, alongside information on how they are being supported to improve this and reduce the likelihood of exclusion.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there have been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy or where allowing the child to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Where a child in care is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible. The VSH will work with the designated teacher and other relevant individuals to consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

The school will inform those with parental responsibility that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

10. Children with SEND

Support for children in care with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), who do not need an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously children in care.

The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that children in care and previously children in care with SEND are supported in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting children with SEND may lack applicability for children in care, e.g. where children in care are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHCPs taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

11. Information sharing

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the educational needs of children in care and previously children in care are understood and met. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on children in care and previously children in care and how data will remain secure.
- How children and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual children is passed between local authorities and the schools during times of transition such as changing classes or setting.

School staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils. This will include sharing information about any adults with whom a pupil has contact, which may impact the pupil's safety or welfare, where necessary.

Staff members will ensure that fear of sharing information does not stand in the way of their responsibility to promote the welfare and safety of children in care and previously children in care. If staff members are in doubt about sharing information and data protection legislation, they will speak to the DSL.

The school will aim to be as transparent as possible by telling families what information they are sharing and with whom, provided that it is safe to do so.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an **annual** basis by the headteacher and governing body. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2026**.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.