



Woolwich Polytechnic  
School for Girls



## **WOOLWICH POLYTECHNIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

### Children in our Care Policy

Reviewed: May 2024  
Approved: July 2024  
Revision due: September 2025

### **Rationale:**

Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

Designated Teacher for CIOC – Emma Smith

Local Academy Committee Members with responsibility for CIOC – Nadine Milwood

### **Policy in Practice:**

This policy statement outlines the commitment of the staff and Local Academy Committee Members of Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CIOC as for all children;
- ensure that all CIOC and previously CIOC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability;
- ensure that CIOC and previously CIOC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities;
- ensure that carers and social workers of CIOC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment;
- ensure that CIOC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

### **Who are Children In Our Care?**

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is 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);
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38);
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46); and
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer in care in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if they are in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

All these groups are said to be '**Children In Our Care**' (or CIOC). They may be looked after by our local authority (Greenwich) or may be in the care of another authority, but living in ours.

### **Admissions**

The Trust Board will ensure that the admissions criteria and practices prioritise CIOC according to the DfE's Admissions Code of Practice.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our CIOC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Local Academy Committee will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all CIOC pupils.

### **Allocation of resources**

The Local Academy Committee will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CIOC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The DSL and DDSL will track the provisions provided for CIOC, and ensure they are personalised and reviewed to ensure they are having impact.

### **Monitoring the progress of CIOC**

The social worker for the CIOC should initiate an electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) within 20 days of them joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. These ePEPs are recorded using the online system, Welfare Call. The school will play an active part in supporting the process and it is vital that it assesses each CIOC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular (at least termly) intervals. CIOC will require their ePEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the ePEP.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher will know all the CIOC in the school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social workers.

The Designated Teacher will also know about any CIOC from other authorities. It is important that the school "flags" CIOC status appropriately in its information systems so that information is readily available as required.

### **Staff Development**

The Designated Teacher will be provided with appropriate training to carry out their role. This will involve being part of the Local Authorities training. The DSL will

also ensure that staff are kept up to date on training for attachment, trauma, mental health and SEND.

### **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

At Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable CIOC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

### **Links with external agencies/organisations**

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting CIOC.

Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual CIOC:

- CIOC teams;
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services;
- medical officers;
- school nurses;
- CAMHS;
- Attendance Advisory Officers;
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker; and/ or
- Youth Offending Service.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Rationale for roles and responsibilities:**

Children in our Care are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements;
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities;
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population;
- underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by CIOC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education;

- listening to children;
- providing stability and continuity;
- taking corporate responsibility;
- promoting inclusion;
- raising standards;
- intervening early;
- promoting early years experiences;
- celebrating success.

**The Designated Teacher will:**

- be an advocate for CIOC within the school;
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for CIOC on both the CIOC and the rest of the school community;
- know who are all the CIOC 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;
- attend relevant training about CIOC;
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CIOC, seeking advice from the CIOC team when appropriate;
- ensure that CIOC receive a positive welcome on entering the school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle;
- ensure that all CIOC have an appropriate ePEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review ePEPs at transfer and at termly intervals;
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a CIOC is experiencing difficulties or is at 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;
- act as the key adviser for staff and Local Academy Committee Members on issues relevant to CIOC;
- ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events;
- actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for CIOC;
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a CIOC transfers to another educational placement;
- contribute information to CIOC reviews when required;
- report to The Local Academy Committee on CIOC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development;
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc;

- prepare reports for Local Academy Committee Members' meetings to include:
  - the number of CIOC on roll and the confirmation that they have an electronic Personal Education Plan – ePEP;
  - their attendance compared to other pupils;
  - their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils;
  - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions;
  - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend Local Academy Committee meetings as appropriate – such as the disciplinary and exclusion of CIOC;
- arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk;
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. CIOC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

**All school staff will:**

- follow school procedures;
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a CIOC's progress;
- have as high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of CIOCs for other pupils;
- positively promote the raising of a CIOC's self-esteem;
- ensure any CIOC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on CIOC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings;
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a CIOC is experiencing difficulties;
- 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 other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate;

**The Local Academy Committee will:**

- ensure all Local Academy Committee Members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CIOC;
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for CIOC;
- liaise with the Head of School, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of CIOC are met;
- nominate a Local Academy Committee Member with responsibility for CIOC who links with the Designated Teacher;
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.

- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give CIOC equal access in respect of:
  - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational;
  - out of school learning and extra-curricular activities;
  - Counselling and mentoring services;
  - work experience and careers guidance.

**The Trustees of PolyMAT will:**

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises CIOC according to the DfE's Admissions Code of Practice;
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give CIOC equal access in respect of admission to the school.

**Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls will:**

- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for CIOC;
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to any exclusion meetings of CIOC;
- give only official exclusions 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 for CIOC;