Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust



BDAT CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND KINSHIP CARE POLICY

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1. Trust Policy Statement

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) is committed to supporting children who are looked after (CLA)/children in care (CIC), those who have previously been looked after (PCLA) and those in kinship care. Department for Education guidance is clear that all schools have a statutory duty to ensure that children who fall into these categories are well supported, enabling them to achieve their full potential at school. As a Trust whose core values are Inclusion, Compassion, Aspiration, Resilience and Excellence, supporting the most vulnerable children is at the very heart of everything that we do.

This Trust-wide policy applies to all staff, including the Board of Trustees, Governors, Central Staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, and anyone working for and on behalf of Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust.

As part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion, BDAT pledges that our policies will strive to promote equality, fairness, and respect for all staff and pupils. Our policies reflect the BDAT values of inclusion, compassion, aspiration, resilience, and excellence. By working closely with a range of stakeholders, including our school, union, and HR colleagues, we have ensured that BDAT's policies do not unlawfully discriminate against anyone.

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'Trust' refers to BDAT. The terms school and academy are interchangeable. The terms 'Child Looked After' (CLA) and 'Child in Care' (CIC) are interchangeable.

2. Introduction

We recognise that each young person is unique, with different lived experiences, different talents, and different hopes and dreams. Statistically, however, without additional support and intervention, children in care, those who have previously been looked after by the local authority and those who are in kinship care are at increased risk of experiencing:

- Lower attainment at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in comparison with their peers
- Poorer attendance and higher suspension rates than their peers
- A higher level of disruption/change to their educational placements than their peers
- A lower level of involvement in extracurricular activities than their peers
- Underachievement in further and higher education compared to their peers.

Our aim in each BDAT academy is to create a school environment where excellent teaching is underpinned by strong routines and relationships that enable all pupils to flourish, while also being proactive in recognising and supporting the needs of our most vulnerable pupils, including those who are experiencing or have experienced the care system.

3. Scope and Aims of the Policy

This policy is designed to promote the educational achievement, welfare and successful progression of pupils in BDAT schools who are looked after by the local authority, who have previously been looked after by the local authority or are in kinship care.

It complements the BDAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and outlines the commitment of all BDAT schools to:

- Fully and holistically support children who are looked after, were previously looked after or are in kinship care, to help them reach their educational potential.
- Identify a Designated Teacher to work with the local authority to promote the educational outcomes of students who are in care, were previously looked after, or are in kinship care. The named of the Designated Teacher will be stated on the school website.
- Ensure that all staff clearly understand their role and responsibilities in relation to pupils who are looked after, were previously looked after by the local authority, or are in kinship care.
- Demonstrate commitment to multi-agency working by fully participating in processes that support children in care (e.g. Personal Education Planning meetings and Child Looked After Review meetings).
- Recognise the importance of staff training on the barriers a child with experience of the care system may face and how to support these children to overcome any such obstacles in line with best practice approaches.
- Provide families, carers, and other relevant agencies with information on the school's duties and responsibilities to promote the educational outcomes of children who are looked after, were previously looked after, or are in kinship care.

4. Definitions

4.1 Children Looked After (CLA)

A child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if they are in the care of the local authority or get accommodation from the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours. This term can be used interchangeably with the term 'Child in Care'.

4.2 Previously Children Looked After (PCLA)

A child is previously looked after if they have ceased to be a child looked after as a result of:

- A Child Arrangements Order (CAO)
- A Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Adoption

4.3 Children in Kinship Care

The government (as detailed in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2026) defines kinship care as when a child lives with a relative, friend or other person connected with them for all the time, or for more time than they live with their parent.

There are different types of kinship care arrangements, including those arranged privately by a family and those arranged or supported by the local authority. From September 2026, schools are expected to record pupils who live in kinship care via their Management Information System.

4.4 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

This is an education-focused plan that forms part of a child who is looked after's wider care plan. It contains short, medium and long-term targets, along with details of how their Pupil Premium Plus

funding is being used to support them in achieving these targets and fulfilling their educational potential.

4.5 Virtual School Head

This person is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children in care across their local authority. This also includes children who were previously looked after, those in kinship care and those with a social worker. They work collaboratively with schools to monitor and support children who are looked after as if they were in a single virtual school. They are also responsible for providing information and advice to schools and parents/carers.

4.6 Pupil Premium Plus Funding (PP+)

Pupil Premium Plus funding is managed by the Virtual School Head and is designated for the purpose of meeting the needs and supporting the educational achievement of children in care.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Trust Board will:

- Hold the BDAT Education Directors accountable for the educational outcomes of children who are looked after, previously looked after or in kinship care through termly Education Committee Meetings.

5.2 The Local Governing Body will:

- Ensure that their school has appointed a Designated Teacher to oversee the education and support for children who are looked after, previously looked after and are in kinship care.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has the appropriate seniority, professional experience, training and skills to perform the role.
- Ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge, and understanding to promote the educational outcomes and holistic development of children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care.
- Monitor the educational experiences and outcomes of children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care, and provide challenge to the Headteacher as required.

5.3 The Headteacher will:

- Work closely with the Local Governing Body, their senior leadership team, and the Designated Teacher to ensure that strategic development and whole-school improvement mechanisms lead to the best educational outcomes for children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care.
- Take overall responsibility for the educational experience of children who are looked after, previously looked after or are in kinship care.

5.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Work closely with the Designated Teacher to provide support and provision as required for children who are looked after, previously looked after or are in kinship care.
- Ensure that the Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) is kept up to date for children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care, including details of their social worker and Virtual School Headteacher.
- Engage with relevant training and development opportunities provided by the Virtual School.

- Work with the Designated Teacher to ensure that information about children who are looked after, were previously looked after or are in kinship care is shared appropriately and sensitively, taking into account the child's wishes if possible.

5.5 The Designated Teacher will:

- Collaborate with the Virtual School Headteacher and other external agencies as needed to ensure that the needs of children in care are met, including how Pupil Premium Plus funding will be utilised. This will be achieved by contributing to, monitoring, and reviewing the Personal Education Plan within statutory timescales.
- Work with the Virtual School to promote the educational outcomes of previously looked after children, recognising that, although they may not be subject to the Personal Education Plan process, they may still require support and guidance.
- Work with the kinship carers and any relevant external agencies to promote the educational outcomes of children in kinship care, recognising that, although they may not be subject to the Personal Education Plan process, they may still require support and guidance.
- Coordinate input from key staff members, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Behaviour Lead and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator, to develop plans of support for children with overlapping vulnerabilities.
- Ensure that school staff understand the impact of the life experiences of children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care can have on the way they learn and develop, including strategies that can overcome any difficulties.
- Promote a culture in which children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care can discuss their progress, be involved in setting their own targets, have their voices heard, and be supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Promote a culture in which children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care are encouraged to participate in enrichment, extra-curricular, and student leadership opportunities.
- Liaise with teaching staff to ensure that children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care are prioritised for interventions and targeted support as required.
- Ensure that there are positive and productive relationships with the parents/carers of looked after children, previously looked after children, and those in kinship care, so that school and home can work in partnership to foster the academic and personal development of the child.
- Ensure that any transitions of children who are looked after, previously looked after, or those in kinship care (e.g. moving to Secondary School or Further Education) are supported by robust plans to minimise any anxiety that could arise.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns relating to looked after children, previously looked after children, and those in kinship care are responded to quickly and effectively.

5.6 All Staff will:

- Ensure that all children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care reach their educational potential by having equally high aspirations and expectations of them as their peers, while also providing any necessary scaffolding or support to help them achieve these goals.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social impact of loss and separation from birth families.
- Recognise that some children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care may struggle to develop trusted relationships with adults due to their life experiences and

developmental stage, and that they may need a more proactive approach to foster these relationships.

- Prioritise students who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care when planning support and intervention in the classroom, as well as with other opportunities that arise in school, such as student leadership, field trips, and extra-curricular activities.
- Understand the importance of seeing children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care as individuals rather than a homogenous group, not publicly treating them different from their peers, and showing sensitivity to their background.

6. Working in Partnership

The support that our schools give pupils to help dismantle barriers should not be viewed in isolation. We are wholly committed to working with parents, carers, the local authority, the Virtual School, and any other relevant agencies to ensure a holistic and collaborative approach is taken to promote the achievement and development of children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care.

We value the views of parents/carers, and we firmly believe that developing strong partnerships is vital to enable all children to reach their full potential.

We recognise the essential contributions that external support services, such as Children's Social Care and the Virtual School, make in supporting both the academic and personal development of children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care.

As per the new duty within the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, the Bradford Kinship Care Local Offer can be found here.

7. Links with Other Policies and Guidance

This Children Looked After Policy should be read in conjunction with the following BDAT Policies and is underpinned by the following statutory guidance:

- BDAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- BDAT Anti-Bullying Policy
- BDAT Attendance Statement
- BDAT Behaviour Statement

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children - February 2018
- Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children – February 2018
- The Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009
- Championing Kinship Care - The National Kinship Care Strategy - December 2023
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (Section 20)
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children Act 1989

8. Policy Review and Monitoring

This Children Looked After and Kinship Care Policy will be reviewed annually. We will monitor the application of this policy to ensure it is working effectively to achieve its core purpose of promoting the educational achievement, welfare and progression of all children who are looked after, previously looked after, or in kinship care in BDAT schools.

Appendix One: Summary of Policy Changes

The table below provides a summary of changes to this policy over time:

September 2025	
Page	**Summary of Change**
Throughout	Updated all references to KCSIE 2024 to KCSIE 2025
3	In 'Trust Policy Statement', added in that this policy also includes children who are in kinship care
3	In 'Introduction', added in that this policy also includes children who are in kinship care
3	In 'Scope and Aims of Policy', added in that this policy also includes children who are in kinship care
4	In the section outlining the commitments of BDAT schools, added in that these apply to children in kinship care (as appropriate)
4	Added in a definition of Kinship Care into the 'Definitions' section
5	Updated the section on the Virtual School Head to reflect that their responsibilities also include promoting the educational outcomes of previously looked after children, those in kinship care and those with a social worker
5-6	Added in for each stakeholder in 'Roles and Responsibilities' that this extends to children in kinship care
7	In 'Working in Partnership', added in that this policy also includes children who are in kinship care
7	Updated hyperlinks to ensure that they link to latest versions of guidance/legislation
September 2026	
Page	**Summary of Change**
Title	Changed policy title to specifically reference children in kinship care to demonstrate BDAT's commitment to supporting these pupils from the outset
Throughout	Updated all hyperlinks and references to guidance to ensure they refer to the latest versions.
4	Amended the definition of kinship care to bring it into line with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2026. Noted that schools are now expected to record children living in kinship care arrangements on their Management Information System.
7	Added in link to the Bradford Kinship Care Local Offer.