



Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Date of last review: July 2022

Date of next review: July 2023

Approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on 6 July 2022

Reviewed by: Jayne Staves

This policy will be reviewed sooner if there is a change to legislation or guidance which may affect it.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN OUR SCHOOL IS HELD BY:

Mrs Claire FitzPatrick (Headteacher)

Miss T Burke (Designated Teacher)

GOVERNOR WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IS:

Mrs Julie Jennens

Purpose of a Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker. Schools play a pivotal role in this.

Definition

The term "looked after" was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to children who are

- **accommodated** (Children Act 2004 Section 20) where the local authority is caring for the young person either by agreement with or at the request of the natural parents. Their parents retain full parental rights and must be consulted fully on all issues.

- subject to a **care order** (Children Act 2004 Section 31) or **interim care order** where the local authority shares parental responsibility with the natural parents and is expected to act in partnership with them.

Looked After Children or Children in Public Care:

- May live in foster care
- May live in a residential children's home
- May live at home with their parents or extended family

Previously looked after children are

- children no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they 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)

Statutory Framework

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department for Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children (Statutory Guidance February 2018). Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after/ previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker.
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after/ previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker.
- Promote the attendance of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker.
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all looked after/ previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker.
- Develop systems of communications and protocols.

The overall aim of this policy is to provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all children, which maximises their abilities to reach their potential, and to bring the educational achievement of our looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker closer in line with others who attend the Nursery.

In order to achieve this, we will ensure that:

- All staff recognise that Nursery can be a place of 'normality' and continuity for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.
- All staff have high expectations of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker.

- Parents and/or carers are actively encouraged to remain involved in their child's education where possible.
- Children's views are listened to and acknowledged.
- Confidentiality around information about looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker is respected.
- We work in partnership with other agencies and services to support children's education.
- Looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker, while having appropriate support, are never made to feel different from other children in school.
- All staff are sensitive to the background of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker in teaching, especially around work on families.
- We provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- We recognise that looked after and previously looked after children, who are members of ethnic minority groups or who have a disability, may be especially subject to isolation.
- The needs of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker are included when reviewing all other school policies.
- All teaching staff are provided with regular training and will cascade this training to other staff members as appropriate.

Admission/Induction arrangements

Looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LA's published admission criteria.

Confidentiality

Many looked after/previously looked after children and those who have/have had a social worker and their families do not want school staff to be aware of their status.

The named governor will work in cooperation with the head teacher and teaching staff to ensure that all looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker have equal access to learning opportunities in line with their peers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher will:

- Be responsible for all systems to support looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker.
- Report termly to the governing body on:

- the number of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker in the school including contextual information about the children
- the attendance of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker compared to others and actions being taken to improve their attendance
- an analysis of progress and achievement levels as a vulnerable group compared to others
- how Pupil Premium money is being spent to support the achievement of looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker
- any resourcing/planning issues arising from specific needs of the children
- events to celebrate
- any complaints

The Designated Teacher will:

- Attend appropriate training and relevant meetings.
- Keep up to date with emerging research and new initiatives that should inform the direction of work with looked after and previously looked after children
- Communicate with the Virtual Headteacher for looked after and previously looked after children.
- Maintain and respect confidentiality of all looked after and previously looked after children, ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- Ensure that all staff, through appropriate training/cascading training, are aware of the difficulties faced by looked after and previously looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements.
- Maintain records for all looked after and previously looked after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted about matters concerning the child.
- Monitor the educational progress of all looked after and previously looked after children and intervene, in cooperation with agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or other similar concern.
- Develop and regularly review the EYPEP (received from the local authority) to identify strengths, weaknesses, any barriers to learning and the progress of a looked after child.
- Ensure looked after and previously looked after children receive any extra support they may need with transition.
- Facilitate effective communication by
 - building positive home-school relationships between parents and/ or carers with regular opportunities for dialogue

- ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked after children
- inviting the appropriate social worker to any meetings and helping to coordinate these
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- monitor each child's achievement and ensure they have the support they require in Nursery by:
 - meeting with the parents and/or carers of the looked after child to discuss who needs to know they are looked after
 - requesting support from the SENDCO and/or outside agencies, including the Virtual School Headteacher, if a looked after child requires additional academic or behavioural support
 - working closely with the SENDCO to ensure all looked after children with special educational needs are being assessed and getting appropriate resources to support their learning

The named governor should keep up to date with government expectations regarding Looked After/Previously Looked After Children and Children who have/have had a social worker and be satisfied that:

- teaching staff have the training they require to support looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker
- teaching staff have the time and resources to do the work they need to do to support looked after/previously looked after children and children who have/have had a social worker
- support, listen and challenge the teaching staff

Complaints

If the parents and/or carers wish to complain about the provision or policy, they should raise it with the teaching staff who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved in 10 days the carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the head teacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue that remains unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint on the child's education. This meeting should include the named governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the head teacher's response.

