**[Local Authority or Academy Group]**[School]

**Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Policy**

Review date:

Ratified by the Governing Body:

Next review: (or before if guidance changes)

**Purpose of this Policy**

Nationally, Children Looked After and Previously Looked After significantly under-achieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and of becoming NEET compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that children in care are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

It is, therefore, essential that at [school] we promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled.

Our policy for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After is subject to review and approval by the Governing Body. Our policy sets out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After, but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality teaching and learning and in making good or accelerated progress.

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term ‘in care’ now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘accommodated’ by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be ‘Children Looked After’ (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

Children Previously Looked After are children who have previously been in the care of the Local Authority and have now returned to parents, have been adopted or guardians have been granted a Special Guardianship Order.

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance for local authorities ‘[Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children’ (2018)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf) under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance for schools on the roles and responsibilities ‘[The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children’](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf) (2018)

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH). In [insert local authority], the Virtual School Head is [VSH name].

It is also important to remember for a Child Looked After, that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

**Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After on the roll of the school.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After for the school is: [name], [role].

**The Role of the Designated Teacher for Within School Systems:**

* To ensure that the educational achievement of each Child Looked After and Previously Looked After on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and wherever possible, accelerated;
* To ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP) each term for every Child Looked After with SMART targets that will promote progress;
* It is good practice to consider having a PEP for Previously Looked After Children although this is not statutory.
* To advise on most effective use of the core Pupil Premium Plus during the Personal Education Planning meeting;
* To ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus funding and any additional funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how the funding is spent and able to produce evidence of good progress and outcomes;
* To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people ‘in care’ including a good knowledge of attachment and trauma on behaviour and learning
* To ensure that school leaders understand the need for positive systems of support within the school to support Children Looked After positively to succeed in school;
* To actively promote the involvement of these children in a rich diet of enrichment activities in school, including homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils etc.;
* To ensure that members of staff who teach the Children Looked After and Previously Looked After on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the target setting at the Personal Educational Planning meeting;
* To act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
* To develop and monitor systems for effective multi-agency working with carers and colleagues in Children’s Services, (CS) and birth parents where appropriate;
* To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care on roll, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer (s), and that this information is kept up to date, used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and to make good progress;
* To track and support the educational progress of all children who are Looked After or Previously Looked After in order to inform the school’s development plan;
* To intervene quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium or Pupil Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress;
* To intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy;
* To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them;
* To report to the Governing Body, at least on an annual basis (preferably each term), on the outcomes for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After.
* To attend training as appropriate;

**Work with Individual Children Looked After:**

* To discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
* To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
* To ensure that the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the student are faithfully represented in the PEP;
* To supervise the smooth induction of a new Child Looked After or Previously Looked After into the school;
* To develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After and close the gap between them and their peers;
* To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

**Liaison:**

* To liaise with the member of school staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Plan;
* To develop effective communication with Children’s Services (CS) staff so that the Personal Education Plan is congruent with the child’s Care Plan;
* To attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
* To be the named contact for colleagues in Children’s Services, (CS);
* To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school roll to the Virtual School as requested.

**Training:**

* To ensure all school staff have training on working effectively with vulnerable learners;
* To attend the annual Designated Teachers conference and participate in area termly briefings and to be willing to share good practice;
* To develop knowledge of procedures by attending training events organised by the Children’s Services, (CS) and the Virtual School.
* To keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE, other research or policy.

**Governor**

The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children in the school: [name]

**The role of the Governor**

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

* The number of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After pupils in the school;
* A comparison of progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
* A comparison of attainment measures as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
* The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
* The number of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
* Pupil destinations after leaving the school.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school’s policies and procedures ensure that Children Looked After and Previously Looked After have equal access to:

* Full time educational provision – at least 25 hours;
* Public examinations;
* Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. One to One tuition
* Employment Excellence careers guidance;
* Additional education support;
* Extracurricular activities;
* Pupil Premium or Pupil Premium Plus funding to raise to raise attainment.

The named Governor may want to ensure that the whole Governing Body have a full understanding of the efficient and effective use of Pupil Premium including Pupil Premium Plus.

**School Responsibility**

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person is aware that he/she is Looked After or Previously Looked After. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher.

It is appropriate for a member of the support staff team to have knowledge that the young person is in care only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person. However, it is important that these staff are aware of the effect of attachment and trauma on the behaviour and learning of these children. In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child’s circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Headteacher or the Designated Teacher.

**Admission Arrangements**

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil’s previous school and a PEP meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate within 20 days – but always involving someone with parental responsibility. An appropriate school induction must take place. Education Law defines who is a parent very widely. It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. This means it is possible for someone who does not have parental responsibility to be a ‘parent’ because they have care of the child in question for example the foster carer.

**Involve the Young Person**

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education. It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan by the Designated Teacher to inform the Care Plan review meetings. It is important to establish the child’s view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

**Communication with Other Agencies**

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. End of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person’s Social Worker in addition to the foster carer and the Virtual School, and where appropriate, the birth parents. A copy should also be attached to the child’s PEP. School, education and social work colleagues within Children’s Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual Statement or EHC plan Review and a Personal Education Plan meeting or review. Good communication is essential between professionals. It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person’s circumstances, e.g. if the school is considering a change of course, there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision e.g. behaviour or attendance.

**Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures**

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of focus and include targets and associated actions to improve performance, progress or educational achievement.

* Areas for consideration will include:
* Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
* Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
* Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations); • Educational Data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages;
* Effective use of the Pupil Premium and evidence of impact;
* Extended learning opportunities;
* Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
* Special needs (if any);
* Attendance;
* Behaviour.

The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all children looked after against the key indicators outlined above. The PEP will be updated and reviewed each term or at the point of any major change and contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan

**Review**

This policy should be reviewed on an annual basis or before if guidance changes.