

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Learning Academies Trust

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CHANGES

Policy date	Summary of change	Author	Version	Review date
20/09/2024	Rationale (3.0) edited to include the word 'nationally' when commenting on underachievement	Keith Smithers, Headteacher	3.0	01/09/2026
01/07/2026	Clarification of the Designated Teacher's roles and responsibilities Updated definition of a Looked After Child	Keith Smithers, Headteacher	4.0	01/07/2029

1. OBJECTIVES

Elburton primary School is committed to helping every child achieve the highest educational standards he or she possibly can, including raising their aspirations and recognising their potential. We understand the vital role we play in promoting social and emotional development including positively promoting the raising of a child's self-esteem. We recognise that there may be reasons which may affect the behaviour of children and understand that this is often a form of communication which may need a more personalised response or intervention.

We will work alongside, and with, partners including the Plymouth and Devon Virtual School to make sure that looked after children and previously looked after children:

1.1. Enjoy and achieve

- Feel stable and supported in an environment that values education and believes in all children
- Participate in a wide range of out of school activities, including volunteering
- Narrow the gap so that their attainment is in line or better than their peers

1.2. Stay safe

- Are happy at school
- Feel safe and secure at school
- Are advised and signposted to the most appropriate sources of support

1.3. Are healthy

- Are supported to access a wide range of positive activities to promote their physical and/or mental health

1.4. Achieve economic well-being

- Make successful and sustained transitions to secondary school

- Develop the skills necessary to live in the 21st Century [independently] and be responsible citizens

1.5. Make a positive contribution

- Develop their confidence and self-esteem
 - Have a voice and contribute to decisions that affect them including through the PEP process
- Legislation and guidance

2. DEFINITION

Definition — Looked after child: A child who is in the care of a local authority under section 20 (accommodation with parental consent) or subject to a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989, or is provided with accommodation by the LA. **Previously looked-after child:** a child who was looked-after in England and Wales but ceased to be so because of adoption, a special guardianship order, or child arrangements order (including those who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales).

Previously Looked After Child – is a child who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because he/she is now subject to an Adoption, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order.

3. RATIONALE

Looked-after and previously looked-after pupils are not inherently less able than their peers; however national data shows they are at greater risk of lower attainment and poorer attendance. This policy seeks to address those systemic barriers by ensuring timely interventions, stable placements, high expectations and strong partnership working.

Looked-after and previously looked-after pupils are prioritised for admission in accordance with the DfE School Admissions Code and the Academy's admissions arrangements. Where urgent school placement is required, the school will admit as quickly as possible and ensure an effective welcome and induction.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Teacher for Looked-after children and previously looked after children is: **Lisa Birnie**

The Designated Governor for Looked-after children and previously looked after children is: **Carolyn Haynes**

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure the school publishes its arrangements for supporting looked-after and previously looked-after pupils on the school website, including the name and contact details of the Designated Teacher and Designated Governor, and a summary of how Pupil Premium funding is used.
- ensure that the school / MAT admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked-after children and previously looked after children according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and statutory guidance for Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- appoint a qualified teacher as the Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- ensure that the DT receives training, including understanding trauma and mental health training
- ensure that the DT and staff receive appropriate and on-going support for their role working with Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- liaise with the Head Teacher, DT, SENCO and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked-after children and previously looked after children care are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked-after children and previously looked after children who links with the DT

- ensure there are arrangements in place to keep themselves informed about provision for, and attainment of Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- receive and approve an annual report on numbers, achievements and progress of looked after children within the school and work with the school leadership team to act on any issues raised by the DT
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked after children and previously looked after children
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures have regard to the needs of Looked-after children and previously looked after children, in particular
 - Admission Arrangements
 - Staff Discipline, conduct and grievance procedures
 - Behaviour/discipline policy (including use of exclusions)
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
 - SEND Policy
 - Supporting pupils with medical conditions
 - Equality information and objectives

The Designated Teacher's role and responsibilities:

Monitoring and Reporting

The DT will provide the headteacher and governors with termly anonymised reports on the cohort, including attainment/progress, attendance, exclusions, PEP completion rates, Pupil Premium expenditure and impact, and any safeguarding or wellbeing concerns requiring strategic action.

Training

The DT, and all staff who work regularly with looked-after pupils, will receive annual training covering statutory duties, trauma-informed practice, attachment, attachment-aware pedagogy, behaviour that challenges, SEND interaction with LAC needs, and use of PEPs. New staff will receive an induction briefing within their first term. Training attendance and content will be logged.

Confidentiality

All staff should maintain confidentiality for looked-after pupils but must share information where required for safeguarding, welfare or educational planning. Information sharing should follow GOV.UK guidance and the school's data protection/privacy policies.

Mental Health

The DT will ensure emotional wellbeing is considered in all PEPs, completing Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs) where appropriate and ensuring referral pathways are clear (school-based pastoral support, CAMHS, Virtual School support). Actions and outcomes from SDQs / mental health interventions will be recorded and reviewed at PEP meetings

Transition and Permanence Planning

Where pupils move placements or schools (short-term or permanent), the DT will coordinate an enhanced transition, including transfer of records, meeting with receiving DT, transition plan in PEP, and appropriate pre-visits to reduce disruption. For pupils with planned permanence changes (adoption, SGO), the DT will put in place support for both the pupil and new carer/s and ensure timetabled review of progress post-permanence.

Attendance

The DT will work with the attendance lead to prioritise re-integration and early intervention. Where a looked-after pupil is persistently absent (as defined in the school's attendance policy), the DT will convene a multi-agency meeting.

Exclusions Procedure

Where a fixed-term or permanent exclusion is considered, the DT, Virtual School and social worker must be informed in advance wherever possible. Permanent exclusion of a looked-after pupil will only be used as a last resort and must follow national guidance, ensuring the Virtual School and LA are formally notified.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

DfE Promoting the Education Of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-lookedafter-children>

DfE Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-afterchildren>