



# Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy

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<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	January 2027	Headteacher: Nitash Odedra	<i>N. Odedra</i>
<b>Ratified by Governing Body:</b>			
Chair of Governors: Sue Welford		Insert Signature	<i>Sue Welford</i>

## **Legislation:**

The governing body at Rushey Mead Primary School, is committed to implementing the 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' DfE February 2018, issued under sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. (see Appendix A – LAC and PLAC)

This guidance refers to the following legislation:

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act").

Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act").

Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act.

The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.

## **Our Aim:**

At Rushey Mead Primary School, we will encourage and enable Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) "...to aspire to and achieve their full potential; where strength of character is shaped and sustained by our core Christian values; and where collective and individual well-being is nurtured through a resourceful, reflective, and resilient approach to life and learning" (School Aim - January 2020).

## **Why looked-after and previously looked-after children need the support of a designated teacher? (see Appendix B)**

1. Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.
2. Attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non-looked-after children.
3. Designated teachers help to promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC, alongside the child's foster carer (or residential care worker), social worker or, for previously looked-after children, parents or guardian, will have day-to-day responsibilities for the child. e local authority, the VSH4 will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the school.

## **Our Principles**

- We are corporate parents legally because we are in loco parentis. As corporate parents we accept that we have to be challenged by the question 'is this good enough for my child?'
- To work together, overcome differences between professionals and be child and solution focused.
- Our LAC will have timely access to education that meets their needs. No LAC will be without an appropriate education.
- Our LAC will not miss or be excluded from education: we will always work to find solutions and alternatives for individual LAC.
- Our LAC will feel safe in school and our aspiration is that they will also enjoy learning. A child who does not feel safe will not learn. How children feel about their school is important to us: we will listen and respond.

### **To whom does the policy apply?**

All staff, individuals and organisations, providing or supporting the education of our Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

#### **Governors**

Our governing body will nominate a governor who will:

- Ensure that the needs of Looked After Children are taken into account at a school management level, including: safeguarding and attendance; identification of gifted and talented / SEN; and how those needs are being met.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training about Looked After Children.
- Ensure that the needs and outcomes of Looked After Children are incorporated in policy decisions wherever relevant.
- Ensure the school's work with Looked After Children is reviewed termly by the SLT and governing body.
- Undertake appropriate training

#### **Designated Teacher**

The Head of Pastoral Care will be the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. The Designated Teacher will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them as per statutory guidance: 'The designated teacher for

looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' DfE February 2018.

If parts of the designated teacher role are delegated, this will be made clear to all those who are involved with the child.

**The Designated Teacher will:**

- Know all the Looked After Children in school and those who have recently left care and who may therefore, still need support.
- Make sure the young person's voice is heard and responded to, and for Previously Looked After Children, involve the child's parents/guardians also. (see Appendix C).
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for the achievement of Looked After Children.
- Have sufficient up to date knowledge and training about the education, care and health (physical and psychological) needs of Looked After Children. To respond proactively, support and challenge staff, and seek support and advice from professionals if they reach the limits of their professional knowledge.
- Ensure each LAC has an up to date, complete and high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) every term.
- Ensure appropriate interventions and assessments are carried out so barriers to learning are overcome and record these plans in the PEP.
- Make sure that Looked After Children are prioritised in support arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Work closely with other agencies, sharing information as appropriate.
- Ensure that there are well supported plans for transitions including a plan for education, training and employment Post 16.
- Attend training.
- Keep governors and SLT up to date with the needs, issues and outcomes for Looked After Children via a termly report and any other necessary communication.
- Ensure statutory funding (Pupil Premium Plus) is spent effectively and contributes to rapidly improving the education of all LAC in the school.

**Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Listen to and take account of the views of Looked After Children.

- Regularly review provision and outcomes for Looked After Children.
- Follow guidance and statutory guidance on admissions, exclusions etc.
- Prioritise Looked After Children in resource decisions and ensure that resources directly targeted at Looked After Children (Pupil Premium Plus [see Appendix D], money for special needs etc.) are used directly for them.
- Work with, support and challenge wider partnerships in providing the best possible educational provision and support for our Looked After Children.
- Ensure Looked After Children have access to the best of what the school has to offer and that barriers to do with being in care, which might make this difficult, including mental health concerns: see 'Promoting the health and well-being of looked-after children.pdf' (DfE March 2015)
- Promote multi agency working and a solution focused, child centred approach.
- Ensure the outcomes for Looked After Children are tracked, monitored and appropriate interventions are put in place and included in termly PEPs.

### **Virtual School**

We will work with our Virtual School so they will provide:

- Support and leadership to our school, to ensure that our Looked After Children access high quality learning and support, which meets their needs in a timely way and leads them onto a long term education, training and employment pathway.
- Strategic leadership to ensure there are high aspirations for Looked After Children's education and the right provision, policies and protocols are in place to support them.
- Direct, targeted support for Looked After Children.
- Training about education issues for all those who work with our Looked After Children.
- Specialist support to our school, for example: multi agency working, Personal Education Planning, preventing exclusion and promoting inclusion.
- Support and advice to our LAC's social workers, foster carers and other agencies.
- Advice to other local authorities who have Looked After Children educated in our school.
- Data and analysis of outcomes for Looked After Children in our LA.

## **DEALING WITH KEY CHALLENGES**

### **Admissions**

- We will act in accordance with the law and admissions codes as they apply to schools, giving timely access to Looked After Children.
- Work with the local authority and other authorities to plan for admissions.
- If appropriate, ensure that 'pre admission professionals (and if appropriate PEP) meetings' are held and that arrangements are in place to support a child starting a new school
- Ensure the PEP is reviewed within 28 days of admission.

### **Access to appropriate curriculum**

- Looked After Children will have access to the best curriculum that we can offer. We will work proactively with others to ensure that the curriculum is developed to meet needs.

### **Access to support for LAC with Special Educational Needs**

- We will work proactively to ensure children's needs are assessed early and their needs met.
- The designated teacher will take the lead in ensuring support or assessment from other agencies is in place.
- We expect direct, clear, timely advice from professionals, including attendance at meetings.

### **Preventing exclusion and improving attendance**

- The Virtual School will be informed immediately, of fixed term exclusions by email.
- Where attendance is falling or low, the school will work with other agencies, including the Virtual School, to address the underlying issues and ensure a plan is in the PEP.
- The school will work with other agencies (including foster carer, social worker, psychology services and Virtual School) on prevention strategies. The school will seek, accept and be provided with support in a timely manner according to the availability of resources (including from the Virtual School) if a pattern of exclusion is developing and ensure plans to address issues are in the PEP.
- Funding and resources already in the school's budget to prevent exclusion (e.g. Pupil Premium Plus – see Appendix D) will be used to promote inclusion and prevent exclusion.

- Our aim is to never exclude a Looked After Child:
  - Permanent exclusions will only occur when all other options have been exhausted.
  - Where a permanent exclusion can be anticipated because of a developing pattern of behaviour, alternatives will be found before this occurs.
- If there is a permanent exclusion or managed transfer, we will not take a child off roll until a new placement is found. We will take a lead in working with others to find a high quality alternative placement.

### **Communication and Sharing information**

- We will share attendance, exclusion, target setting, achievement data and plans with relevant agencies including the Virtual School.
- We will respond to requests marked urgent within 24 hours and within an hour in emergencies.
- In other cases we will adhere to statutory or agreed timescales.

### **Multi-agency working**

- We will work proactively with other agencies to meet the needs of Looked After Children and will contribute to the development of these services through receiving and contributing to training.

### **Supporting transitions**

- The designated teacher from the next education placement will be invited to the professionals and PEP meetings in our school. Our designated teacher will attend professionals and PEP meetings in the new placement as requested and appropriate.

### **Working with other LAs**

- We will expect other LAs to provide support for their Looked After Children in our school, including planning, funding and support. This will include all the stipulations of this policy and a particular emphasis on:
  - Pre planning for new education placements. Where there are issues, a pre placement admissions meeting should be held with all professionals involved.
  - Continuing financial support.
  - Continuing professional support via the PEP process.

### **Method for review**

Specific issues with the policy should be raised directly with the Head Teacher or the governing body (as appropriate).

## **Appendix A: Definitions of LAC and PLAC**

Section 52 of the Children Act 2004:

Children who are "Looked After" may be "Accommodated" "In Care" or "Remanded/ Detained" as follows:

### **Accommodated** (Section 20)

This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

### **In Care**

A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

### **Remanded/Detained**

A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:

- an emergency protection order
- removed by police using their powers of protection
- remanded by a court following criminal charges
- a court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

**'Looked After'** is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a court has made a court order.

In partnership with Leicester City Council and its services, it is our duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

## **Appendix B:**

**Looked After Children** may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private.

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

**Appendix C:** 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' DfE February 2018 -

**5 Tips for Designated Teachers on listening to the voice of the child**

- Be available, take the time to get to know me
- Notice if I am upset or angry and listen to me when I need help
- Understand that even though I've had a different past than most people, it doesn't mean I need to be treated differently
- Understand my experience of being looked-after
- Understand that my past will affect my present and my future behaviour even if I don't notice

**What might listening to the voice of the child look like?**

A young person in year 11 had a history of emotional wellbeing issues and periods of education at home and was subsequently taken into care. Integration back into mainstream schooling was supported by periods of alternative provision at a short stay school.

How did listening to the child's voice play a part in positive outcomes for this child? - The young person has been supported to shape their personal education plans, helping to select the interventions and strategies they felt would best help them achieve their goals. Feeling safe and finding their place in the school has been a key area of focus. The young person commented that the teacher "treats me like I am her own child, she treats me with respect, she is taking up her time just to help me"

Outcome - Integration back into mainstream education had been completed and a new care placement had been secured. The young person is on track to make the transition to college following significant gaps in their education. They are in a stable care placement. Most importantly, they have developed self-confidence and feeling of security and being part of a community.

**Appendix D:** 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' DfE February 2018 –

**Getting the most from PP+ 12:**

Approaches that are:

- Individually tailored to the needs and strengths of each pupil
- Consistent: based on agreed core principles and components, but also flexible and responsive
- Based on evidence of what works
- Focussed on clear short-term goals which give opportunities for pupils to experience success
- Include regular, high quality feedback from teaching staff
- Engage parents/carers in the agreement and evaluation of arrangements for education support (e.g. via the PEP)
- Supporting pupil transition (e.g. primary-secondary/KS3-4)
- Raising aspirations through access to high-quality educational experiences
- Promote the young person's awareness and understanding of their own thought process (metacognition) and help to develop problem-solving strategies

Which emphasise:

- Relationship-building, both with appropriate adults and with peers
- An emotionally intelligent approach to the setting of clear behaviour boundaries
- Increasing pupil's understanding of their own emotions and identity
- Positive reinforcement
- Building self-esteem
- Relevance to the learner: relate to pupil's interests where possible - make it matter to them
- A joined-up approach involving social worker/carer/VSH and other relevant professionals
- Strong and visionary leadership on the part of both of the pupil's head teachers
- A child centred approach to assessment for learning

