Children in Care
and
Children Previously in Care
Policy

(Previously the Looked after Children Policy)

October 2026

Next Review: October 2027

Approved by: Governing Body

Introduction

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of children in care and children previously in care, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of children in care and children previously in care and schools play a pivotal role in this.

Definition

The term “looked after” was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child’s welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part- or full-time basis. Furthermore, the term “looked after”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, which has been adopted by the Department for Education in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”. The term “looked after” has recently been revised locally to become “children in care” or “children previously in care”.

Legal Framework

Previous legislation and guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of Children in Care and children previously in care.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly-based education for all children in care and children previously in care
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all children in care and children previously in care
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all children in care and children previously in care
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of children in care and children previously in care
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of children in care and children previously in care

Named Staff Responsible

At Glade Hill Primary & Nursery School the named staff responsible for children in care and children previously in care are:

Named Governor: Rupert Boddington

Designated Teachers: Nicola Rowe and Sam Wardle

Objectives

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each child in care has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are in care or have previously been in care have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum and extra-curricular activities, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are in care or have previously been in care, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the LA's Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavour to support all children in care and children previously in care educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

Roles and responsibilities

Many children in care and children previously in care may not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However, we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible. In addition to this, there may be children in care and children previously in care that are not aware that they are looked after. Sensitivity must be administered in such cases.

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Headteacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all children in care and children previously in care have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Headteacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with children in care and children previously in care.

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- the school has a coherent policy for children in care and children previously in care
- the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfE guidelines
- the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training
- children in care and children previously in care have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- the governing body receives an annual report

The Head Teacher will:

- appoint the Designated Teacher
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training
- oversee the development of the policy on children in care and children previously in care
- be responsible for all systems to support children in care and children previously in care.
- report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:

  - ✓ the number of looked after pupils in the school
  - ✓ an analysis of progress as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
  - ✓ the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
  - ✓ the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
  - ✓ the number of complaints

The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department, and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support children in care and children previously in care within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all children in care and children previously in care in the school.

The Designated Teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding children in care and children previously in care of the school by:

- maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all children in care and children previously in care and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children in care and children previously in care and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- acting as an advocate for children in care and children previously in care in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances

The Designated Teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in care and children previously in care. They will:

- have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after

- maintain records regarding all children in care and children previously in care, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- monitor the educational progress of all children in care and children previously in care and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern

The Designated Teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's Personal Education Plans (PEP)
- playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of children in care and children previously in care
- helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of the PEP.

The Designated Teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- by meeting with the child in care and child previously in care to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role
- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- by requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Education of Children Looked After Service, if a child in care or child previously in care requires additional academic or behavioural support
- by working closely with the SENCO to ensure all children in care and children previously in care with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- by having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions
- by ensuring all children in care and children previously in care are made to feel a part of the school environment

Personal Education Plans

Each child will have an Electronic Personal Education Plan (ePep), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The ePep will consider:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses
- interests, both in and out of school

- developmental and educational and pastoral needs
- future plans, and how these can be supported
- issues arising for the child
- it will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

Children in care and children previously in care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LA's published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received, a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

School Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that children in care and children previously in care experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that children in care and children previously in care enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving places for them on trips or on activities.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

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

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may 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 Headteacher's response.