

# LEEDON LOWER SCHOOL

## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN and PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

October 2024



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**Definition.**

'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 makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

'A Previously Looked After child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; '

This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance for local authorities" 'Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children' Feb 2018 and associated guidance for 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities. Feb 2018

**Post Looked After children**

Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act place duties on the governing body of a maintained school in England to:

- designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked after pupils who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training;
- ensure they and the designated teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State

**Governor Responsible: Mrs Michelle Stewart**

**Designated Lead: Mrs Tracey Hurrell**

Leedon Lower School recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorse the Central Bedfordshire Council policy and welcomes both Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and Looked After Children (LAC) who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Central Bedfordshire. Leedon Lower School's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked After and previously Children is based on the following principles:

Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After and Previously Looked After children.

All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.

Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.

Achieving stability and continuity

Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.

Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes

Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.

Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.

Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

### **Rationale**

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 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. Helping Looked After and Previously Looked After children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Leedon Lower School recognises that both Looked After and Previously Looked After Children can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that they may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. Leedon Lower School recognises that both Looked After and Previously Looked After Children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse, or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Leedon Lower School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Looked After and Previously Looked After Child can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that they can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

### **Responsibility of the Head teacher**

Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, whose role is set out below.

It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.

Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance, and any exclusion of Looked After or Previously Looked After children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.

Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children to all parties involved.

Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

### **Responsibility of the Governing Body**

Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children:

'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked after children'. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities. Feb 2018

'Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked after children'. Statutory guidance for local authorities. Feb 2018

Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of both Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Allocate resources to meet the needs of both Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.

Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are recognised and met.

#### **Receive a termly report setting out:**

1. The number of looked-after and Previously Looked After pupils on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

## **The role of the Designated Teacher**

Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met.

This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.

Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.

Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked After and Previously Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required

Ensure that each Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.

Track academic progress and target support appropriately

Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After and Previously Looked After Children that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LAC and PLAC's may face.

Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.

Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.

Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage Looked After and Previously Looked After Children to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.

Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.

Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.

Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.

Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.

Ensure that attendance is monitored.

Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

### **The responsibility of all staff**

Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, as for all pupils.

Maintain Looked After and Previously Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.

Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.

Work to enable Looked After and Previously Children to achieve stability and success within school.

Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Previously Looked After Children.

Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

### **Confidentiality**

Information on looked after Previously Looked After children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis

The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

### **Record keeping and information sharing**

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the Looked After Child is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

### **Exclusions**

Leedon Lower School recognises that Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions.

Where a LAC or PLAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy and Suspensions and Exclusions Policy for more information.

### **Staff development and training**

The designated teacher will make sure that they keep up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked After Previously Looked After Children.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Looked After or Previously Looked After Children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

### **Support and resources**

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

### **Home-school liaison**

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After and Previously Looked After Children to achieve their potential.

Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

### **Admission arrangements**

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC or PLAC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

The school recognises that Looked After and Previously Looked After children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Looked After and Previously Looked After Children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (**Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006**).

### **Links with other agencies**

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

**Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement**

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability, or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Leedon Lower School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.