



Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

Approved by:	Ryefield Primary LGB	Date: 06/03/2023
Last reviewed on:	07/03/2022	
Next review due by:	March 2024	

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

A suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement and social/emotional wellbeing of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members in achieving this.

Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

Ryefield Primary School also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008 and [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010. As an academy school which includes free school meals, this policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children are registered pupils that are:

In the care of a local authority, or

Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:

- A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
- A special guardianship order
- An adoption order

They appear to the governing board to have:

- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

4. Identity of our designated teacher

Our Designated Teacher is Mrs Hayward

You can contact her by emailing directly at chayward@ryefieldprimary.org.uk or asking for an appointment via the Front Office.

5. Role of the designated teacher

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their new class teacher. Carers/parents will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child feels comfortable in our school. The child will have the opportunity to talk about their hopes, worries and anything else that is important to them, with their new teacher.

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 (PEP), and ensure that communication systems are established early between all parties.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the school and local authority. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child has every opportunity to reach their full potential.

In the first PEP meeting, the designated teacher 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.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

The following information is based on the responsibilities listed in the [DfE's statutory guidance](#). Although the designated teacher will always have lead responsibility for the pastoral and administrative tasks, providing specific care and guidance for looked-after and previously looked-after children is seen as a collective staff support effort at Ryefield.

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children

Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:

- Working with VSHs
- Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised

Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:

- The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
- How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils

Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children

Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities

Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children

Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations

Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs

Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to

Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

5.2 Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs

Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs

Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs

If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP

Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place

During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils

Ensure that:

- A looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered
- PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced
- The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan

Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

5.3 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding

Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment

Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children

Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children

Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use

Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning

- Be aware of the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to looked-after children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children
- Ensure that looked after children and previously looked after children, enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by prioritising placements for them on school trips or other extra-curricular activities.

5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:
 - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
 - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action
 - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption
 - Making sure that, if a looked-after child moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
 - There's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress

- School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
- Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips

Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion:

- Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
- Working with the VSH and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour

Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

Complaints

If a child, carer/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 child, carer/parent or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue 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 Head teacher's response.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Mrs Hayward and submitted to the Board of Governors for inspection and questioning. After every review, it will be approved by the full governing board before being published.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

Behaviour

Child protection and Safeguarding

SEND