

# **Looked After Children Policy**

## **March 2025**

<b>Formally adopted by the Governing Body of:-</b>	<b>Buxton Primary School</b>
<b>On:-</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:-</b>	<b>Kathryn Corder</b>
<b>Review Date:-</b>	<b>March 2027</b>
<b>Last updated:-</b>	<b>March 2023</b>

## **Purpose**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children (LAC) written in accordance with *The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked-After Children: Statutory Guidance on Their Roles (DfE, 2018)* and *Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children Previously Looked-After Children (DfE, 2018)* documents.

## **Rationale**

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. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Buxton Primary School aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and Welfare of Looked After Children.

**The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is:**

Mrs Jo Buchanan (Deputy Headteacher and SENDCo)

**She is supported by:**

Miss Rebecca Weir (Pastoral Lead)

**The named governor for Looked After Children is:**

Mrs Maggi Heavey

The School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children” (February 2018) and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children. We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government’s aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

This school believes in the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success aims
- The aims of the school are to:
  - ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for Looked After Children as for all children
  - ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
  - provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
  - ensure that Looked After pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
  - ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After pupils are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
  - Ensure that Looked After pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.
- The Head Teacher will, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC Admissions.

The Governing Body endorses the Norfolk County Council Policy for the admission of Looked After Children. Due to care placement changes, Looked After Children may enter school mid-term. This school believes that it is vital that we give each Looked After Child a positive

welcome and full support for their induction and to help them settle and be part of our learning community.

### **INCLUSION**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Looked After pupils.

### **ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with Norfolk Virtual School for Looked After Children and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that Looked After Children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

### **MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The social worker for the Looked After Children initiates an Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the child or young person is actively involved. (Where the child is placed in an emergency the PEP should be initiated within 10 working days of their becoming looked after) A PEP should be linked to but not duplicate or conflict with information in any other plans. All PEP's are now electronic. Targets in the plan should be reviewed termly. This school assesses each Looked After pupil's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school have appointed a Designated Teacher, and a trained Pastoral Lead, to support the PEP process.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Social Worker is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP Review meetings.

Record Keeping: The Designated Teacher knows all the Looked After Children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Norfolk Virtual School specialist staff, or other Virtual School specialists for those looked after students who are from other Local Authorities, teacher/support worker and social worker.

The status of Looked After Children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development: We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with LAC within the school and disseminate information.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers: We believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations: We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Norfolk Virtual School for Looked After Children (Looked After Children in Education Team)
- Other Virtual Schools for looked after children from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- School age parents' officer
- External Learning Providers

### **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY REVIEW**

We undertake a thorough review of both the Looked After Children Policy and practice, including attending update training regularly.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children within school
- Be proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise attainment of Looked After Children
- Work in partnership with Norfolk Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those students who are from other Local Authorities, providing termly progress data on the progress of Looked After Children
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Looked After Children on both the Looked After Children and the rest of the school community
- Know all the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about Looked After Children and disseminate information and good practice to other staff
- Influence school policy and practice for Looked After Children
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice from Norfolk Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those students from other Local Authorities, when appropriate.

- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Arrange and contribute to PEP Review meeting, liaise with staff attending the Review to ensure the school is well prepared
- Keep EPEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Monitor the targets set out in the PEP
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for Looked After Children
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement
- Report to the management committee on Looked After Children in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events
- Prepare reports for management committee meetings to include:
  - The number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have an Personal Education Plan (PEP).
  - Their attendance compared to other pupils.
  - Their attainment (SATs/) compared to other pupils.
  - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
  - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- Attend management committee meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.

**All school staff will:**

- Positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self-esteem.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress.
- Ensure any Looked After Children is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Follow school procedures.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties
- Work in partnership with Norfolk Virtual School, and/or Virtual Schools from other Local Authorities, and other agencies to prevent a Looked After Child's behaviour leading to an official exclusion and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement.
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher, Norfolk Virtual School for Looked After Children, and other Virtual Schools for those students who are from other Local Authorities, and professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports available when required.

**The Governors will:**

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- liaise with the Designated Teacher and all other relevant staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met
- Identify a member with special responsibility for Looked After Children
- Nominate a member responsibility for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
  - Admission to school
  - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
  - Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
  - Additional educational support
  - Work experience and careers guidance.
  - Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children