



Frizinghall Primary School

Children Looked After Policy

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To be reviewed on: Autumn 2 2024

Signed on behalf of the governing body: *P. Sayers*

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1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for children who are looked after and previously looked after
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of children who are looked after and previously looked after, and supports other staff members to do this too
- 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](#).

It also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

3. Definitions

Children who are looked after (CLA) and children who have been previously looked after

CLA 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

Children who are previously looked after 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

Personal education plan (PEP)

PEP is part of a CLA's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Virtual school head (VSH)

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 children who were previously looked after. Frizinghall Primary School has a linked Virtual School Teacher who acts on behalf of the VSH. Her name is Felicity Rushworth.

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.

Children looked after 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. The governing body of Frizinghall Primary School, is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- A designated teacher for children looked after
- Personal Education Plans for all children looked after
- Good home-school links
- Effective communication with carers, parents or guardians
- Ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home
- Ensure carers, parents and guardians are aware how the school teaches key skills such as reading, writing and maths.
- Encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment
- Challenge any negative stereotypes of children looked after, if they exist, and insist on the highest levels of expectations for children looked after achieving their full potential

4. Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is Tom Ruddock

You can contact them by leaving a message with the school office.

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

5. Role of the designated teacher

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after
- Promote the educational achievement of every child who is looked after, or has been previously looked after, on roll by:

- Working with VSH/ Link Teacher
- 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 children who are looked after and previously looked after 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 children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after
- Promote a culture in which children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after
- Work directly with children who are looked after/ children who have been previously looked after 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 (After the initial one that is arranged by the social worker/VSH).
- Ensure PEP reviews happen
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education

Confidentiality - We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential. The designated teacher will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff are aware that they cannot make a promise to a child that they will keep a secret. School staff will be sensitive to foster parents, parents or pupils wishes in sharing information about individual circumstances.

5.2 Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure CLA's PEP 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 (after the initial PEP which is arranged by the social worker)
- Monitor and track how CLA'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 CLA'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/ link teacher ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- Transfer a CLA'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 children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after, and how to support them
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for CLA can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously CLA about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging parents to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Work with the DHT in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support a child who has been previously looked after
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus 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 children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after, and make sure other staff also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the [SEND Code of Practice](#), as it relates to CLA, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a CLA may have

- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after, 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 children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after and how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for CLA, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Work with other senior leaders and relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of children who have been previously looked after

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 children who are looked after and children who have been previously looked after.
- 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 children who have been previously looked after 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 CLA, 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 CLA 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 CLA 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 children who have been previously looked after, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each CLA:
 - 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 CLA 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 child, who has been previously looked after, is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

5.5 Additional Adult Responsibilities

Responsibility of the Head Teacher

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will ensure the provision/outcomes for children looked after are specifically recorded in:

- Appropriate school policies and procedures
- Specific Reports on issues such as student progress in relation to targets and exam results; attendance; behaviour; sanctions; exclusions; student voice

In addition, the Headteacher will also:

- Identify a designated teacher for children looked after
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of children looked after and adopted children and act where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of children looked after 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

- To ensure the Governing Body has a named governor responsible for children looked after (Belinda Wardle)
- To be aware of how many children looked after are on roll at our school
- To ensure that there is a designated teacher for children looked after
- To support the Headteacher, designated teacher and other staff to ensure the needs of this group are met and that the school is an inclusive learning environment.
- Attend relevant training
- To review the effective implementation of this policy (annually)

Responsibility of All Staff

To ensure that children looked after and children previously looked after are;

- Supported sensitively and confidentiality is maintained
- To be familiar with this policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings. Teachers should create, monitor and evaluate any provision required to support the child's learning
- To have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after and previously looked after children with an aim to close the attainment gap between this group and their peers
- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary
- As with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting
- Positively promote the self-esteem of children looked after
- To attend designated teacher whole school training and apply techniques to include looked after and previously looked after children within the lessons and school community

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head for Inclusion. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Admissions
- Behaviour policy
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

8. Appendices

Appendix One – Bradford's FAQs.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a PEP? A PEP (Personal Education Plan) is a statutory document for all Children in care), it is the part of the Care Plan which clarifies the child's educational needs. It aims to raise aspirations, maximise outcomes and improve life chances beyond education. It should capture the voice of the child and include SMART targets that are based on the child's needs, strengths, and interests.

Who needs a PEP? All pupils from Reception to Year 13 who are in care need a PEP.

How often should we have PEP meetings? The first PEP meeting must take place within 20 days of a young person being in care, then every 3 months, and then at least every 6 months.

Who is involved in the PEP meeting? The Social Worker will arrange the PEP; they should invite the school, and Parents/Carers. The school should invite the child.

Do the Virtual School attend every PEP meeting? The Virtual School are unable to attend all PEP meetings. Virtual School Link teachers will aim to attend meetings where capacity allows, and prioritisation is as follows: 1. Child/young person is new into care. 2. Change of School or Designated Teacher 3. Progress or Attendance concerns highlighted through Virtual School monitoring (there are currently significant educational concerns for this young person). 4. Multi-agency involvement required due to complexity of needs or care planning arrangements.

What system do Bradford use for PEPS? Bradford uses an electronic PEP service run through Liquid Logic's PEP portal.

Appendix Two – An overview of Bradford's PEP process

