BORROW WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Written by:	Zoe Fletcher	**Date:** 17th April 2022
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Borrow Wood Primary School understands that Looked After and Previously Looked After Children have a need for additional care, provision, support and understanding. While Looked After Children have statutory procedures around them, which are outlined below, Previously Looked After Children are also in need of additional understanding and support. Therefore, apart from where statutory guidelines are discussed, all references to Looked After Children in this policy can and should apply to Previously Looked After Children.

The school is aware of and implements the guidance contained within the key documents outlined below in Appendix 1.

1. Paragraph 1.7 of the School Admission Code 2021 states that "all schools must have oversubscription criteria for each 'relevant age group' and the highest priority must be given, unless otherwise provided in this Code, to looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order). All references to previously looked after children in this Code mean such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Oversubscription criteria must then be applied to all other applicants in the order set out in the arrangements.

   Paragraph 3.29 of the School Admission Code 2021 states that "Where a local authority considers that an Academy will best meet the needs of any child, it can ask the Academy to admit that child but has no power to direct it to do so. The local authority and the Academy will usually come to an agreement, but if the Academy refuses to admit the child, the local authority can ask the Secretary of State to intervene. The Secretary of State has the power under an Academy's Funding Agreement to direct the Academy to admit a child and can seek advice from the Schools Adjudicator in reaching a decision.

2. Academies are under an obligation through their funding agreements to appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of looked after children who are on the school roll.

3. Boards must ensure, as a minimum, that:
   - a designated teacher is appointed;
   - the teacher undertakes appropriate training;
   - it considers an annual report from the designated teacher; and
   - it acts on any issues that the report raises.

4. Regulations specify that the role should be carried out by:
   - a qualified teacher, within the meaning of section 132 of the Education Act 2002, who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required); or
   - the headteacher or acting headteacher at the school.

5. All looked after children have a personal education plan (PEP) as part of the care plan that is drawn up by the local authority that looks after them. The PEP forms part of the child's education record.

When is a child 'looked after'?
The term 'looked after' originates from the **Children Act 1989** and is the legal term for children in care. The terms 'children in public care' or 'children who are looked after' are also used.

A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. A child is looked after under the following circumstances:

- The child is in accommodation commissioned and provided by the Local Authority for more than 24 hours.
- The child is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order, Interim Care Order or Care Order either living at home or placed away from home with relatives, friends or local authority carers.
- The child is remanded to Local Authority Care.
- The child is subject to a Secure Order under the Children Act 1989.
- The child is placed for adoption but the adoption order has not been made.
- The child is an unaccompanied minor.
- The child is in receipt of a series of Short Term Breaks as part of a Family Support plan for periods of 24 hours or more. (These children are only looked after for the time that they are placed away from home and do not need to be on your register of Looked After Children; nor do they need Personal Education Plans.)

The child may be placed to live with foster carers or in a residential children's home or residential settings like schools or secure units.

There are a variety of reasons why children and young people enter care. E.g:

- The child's parents might have agreed to this – for example, if they are too unwell to look after their child or if their child has a disability and needs respite care.
- The child could be an unaccompanied asylum seeker, with no responsible adult to care for them.
- Children's services may have intervened because they felt the child was at significant risk of harm. If this is the case the child is usually the subject of a court-made legal order.

A child stops being looked after when they are adopted, return home or turn 18. However, local authorities in all the nations of the UK are required to support children leaving care at 18 until they are at least 21. This may involve them continuing to live with their foster family.

When is a child NOT 'looked after'?
A child ceases to be looked after when:

- The child returns home to live and is not the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order or Emergency Protection Order.
- The child reaches independence and is not the subject of a Care Order.
- The child reaches 18.
- The child dies.
- The child is adopted.
- The child is made subject to a special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangement order.

Allocation of resources
The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC and previously LAC.

We actively encourage and support staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness with school staff and Governors of issues associated with LAC.

Pupil Premium Plus funding will be applied for and used to "close the gap" in educational outcomes. The process by which this is done varies between Local Authorities. Decisions about how to use Pupil Premium Plus funding will be made in discussion with all relevant parties in the best interests of the Looked After Child and may include the following: specific support to close academic gaps and bespoke Creative Mentoring to support children with emotional and social needs.

Monitoring the progress of LAC
The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 10 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement, attainment and progress of all LAC at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the Reviewing Officer, Social Worker or Designated Teacher. The young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

The Designated Teacher will know who all the LAC are in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker, PEPs and attainment and progress data. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other Local Authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Partnership working
At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. LAC Review meetings and ePEP meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

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

- Derby City or (other neighbouring authorities) Virtual School for LAC
- Educational psychologists and SEN services
- Health service
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social Care Workers/Children's Practitioners/Residential Child Care Worker
- Youth Offending Service
- Multi-Agency Teams.

LAC policy review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's provision for LAC
The LAC policy will be reviewed annually.

The school will evaluate provision and the outcome of this will inform the developmental actions which are necessary to improve practice.

APPENDIX 1

- Governance handbook for trustees of academies and multi-academy trusts and governors of maintained schools DfE October 2020
- The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, February 2018
- Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children Statutory guidance for local authorities, February 2018
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children Act 1989
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England Statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion, September 2017
- School Admissions Code Mandatory requirements and statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels

APPENDIX 2 - **Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher**

The role of the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher should be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

The most effective designated teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This involves, working with VSHs to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:

- have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and
- for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

Designated teachers are also likely to have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by:

- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:
    - they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
    - there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
    - there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
    - particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
    - transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
    - thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
    - when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and

- there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings).

• Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children;
  - are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
  - are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-toone tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
  - are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
  - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
  - can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.

• Being a source of advice for teachers about:
  - differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and
  - the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.

• Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:
  - promote good home-school links;
  - support progress by paying particular attention to 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 or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and
  - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.

• having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked dafter children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary; and

• working 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.

When supporting previously looked-after children, designated teachers should be aware of the following: the VSH must provide information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of these children - this may be general information, including training opportunities, or information and advice on individual children at the request of their parents or designated teacher. The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, including any requests to the VSH for advice on meeting their individual needs.

Derby City Virtual School for LAC contact details:

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