

Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Policy



Thorn Grove Primary School

Approved by Governing Body on:	27th March 2023
<i>L. Vose</i> Headteacher	<i>C. Alcock</i> Chair of Governors
Next review due by:	March 2025

Introduction

At Thorn Grove Primary School we believe that all looked after children and previously looked after children should have every opportunity to access excellent educational provision and achieve their full potential. We, as a school community, aim to be champions for looked after children and previously looked children. We address any underachievement and aim to bring their attainment more in line with that of non-looked after children so that they experience improved outcomes in every aspect of their lives, now and in the future as an adult.

How do we promote the education and welfare of our looked after and previously looked after children?

At Thorn Grove Primary School we will:

- provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children
- endeavour to close the gap between the educational attainments of our looked after children, previously looked after children and our non-looked after children
- make sure that looked after and previously looked after children have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to appropriate support
- identify our role to promote and support the education of our looked after children and previously looked after children
- appoint a designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children who will take an active role in promoting each young person's attainment and ensure that their wider needs are met. Our designated teacher will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate) and social worker on a wide variety of educational and care issues
- promote personalised learning where appropriate

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for looked after children and previously looked after children by ensuring that the relevant personnel with responsibility for looked after children and previously looked after children have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and carry out their duties.

How do we achieve a whole school approach?

- our school celebrates the achievements of looked after children and previously looked after children
- all our staff have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition
- the young person will have a special, trusted adult in school who is able to take time to listen to them
- our staff are aware that being in care has a major impact on a child's life. Due consideration of this is given in all areas of the child's school life
- all our teachers are made aware of the needs of looked after children, previously looked after children and actively promote their best interests
- all adults in school are sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status
- we ensure that looked after children and previously looked after children are listened to, and have access to support and counselling in school if required

- our teachers are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem
- our teachers are aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers
- effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established in accordance with the school's policy on looked after children and previously looked after children
- systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about looked after children and previously looked after children
- teachers actively seek training to help them fulfil their roles in relation to looked after and previously looked after children, in particular, attachment and trauma training
- the designated teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained
- our school supports the engagement of looked after and previously looked after children in out of school hours learning
- our staff work in partnership with parents, carers and agencies
- we support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance. For young looked after children, there is clarity in relation to who is and who is not allowed to collect the child from school

Our designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children is Gary Wilson – Deputy Headteacher

The most effective designated teachers are senior leaders. Not all aspects of the role of the designated teacher need necessarily be carried out by a single individual or by a qualified teacher. While lead responsibility for raising attainment of looked after and previously looked after children on roll must rest with the designated teacher, schools will need to decide how functions within it, including pastoral and administrative tasks, are most appropriately delegated to suit their own circumstances. (Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children – statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018).

Our designated teacher will:

- ensure that the school does everything possible to maximise educational stability for the child
- track the educational progress and attendance of all looked after children and previously looked after children on the school roll including Stockport LAC and LAC from other LAs (OLAs)
- maintain detailed individual records on all looked after children and previously looked after children
- report annually to the governing body and provide additional information as required
- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations amongst the whole school community regarding looked after children and previously looked after children's achievements and attainment
- liaise with virtual school
- ensure that looked after children and previously looked after children have equitable access to school resources and initiatives, and ensure effective use of pupil premium plus
- ensure that every effort is made to enable looked after children and previously looked after children access a wide range of extracurricular activities
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting their learning targets and reviewing their progress

- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children
- make sure that looked after children and previously looked after children are prioritised in arrangements that support learning outside school and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- have the lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school
- in conjunction with the social worker, ensure that the PEP is in place within 14 days of starting at our school and that it is circulated within 10 days of the PEP meeting
- ensure that the PEP is updated and available for the statutory LAC review
- help looked after children and previously looked after children make a smooth transition to their new school or college, including making sure there are effective arrangements in place for the speedy transfer of information
- ensure that there is an agreed process in place for how the school works with other agencies
- ensure that school policies, e.g. home school agreements, are communicated to social workers and carers

Our designated school governor for looked after and previously looked after children is Chris Hunter.

The governing body, Headteacher and school leadership team will want to consider the following in supporting the designated teacher role:

- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked after and previously looked after children?
- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked after and previously looked after children and act as a champion for them?
- Does the designated teacher have training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked after and previously looked after children, including a good knowledge of SEN (Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children – statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018).
- The governing body will receive an annual report which includes:
 - ◆ progress for each young person
 - ◆ patterns of attendance and exclusions
 - ◆ process or planning issues in relation to personal education plans
 - ◆ how educational needs are being met including for those who are more able
 - ◆ SEND; whether needs are being met through EHCPs or other SEND support plans
 - ◆ effective use of pupil premium plus
 - ◆ access to extracurricular activities
 - ◆ how looked after children and previously looked after children's needs are reflected in school development plans and are being met in relation to interventions and resources
 - ◆ training attended by the designated teacher
 - ◆ work with the Stockport virtual school and equivalents in other LAs

- ◆ the impact of school policies on looked after children and previously looked after children
- ◆ any workload issues arising from the role
- The governing body will give careful and due consideration to the report and act on any issues it raises so as to support the designated teacher and maximise the impact of the role.

Our virtual school link teacher is Gary Wilson

We will:

- work in partnership with the virtual school
- contribute to regular monitoring meetings with the virtual school
- seek support from the virtual school when required
- notify the virtual school of any attendance issues, exclusions or changes in the child's circumstances
- provide the virtual school with data e.g., teachers assessments, targets, exam results, attendance rates, etc as required

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

We will:

- in conjunction with the social worker, hold and chair a PEP meeting and subsequent PEP reviews
- ensure that there is a PEP for each child to include appropriate targets. This will be integral to the child's care plan held by social worker and form part of any other school plan e.g. EHCP, transition plan, pastoral support programme
- ensure, in conjunction with social workers, that all looked after children have a high quality PEP in place within 14 days of starting our school. PEPs will be effective and include SMART educational objectives and targets in the PEP action plan
- detail the effective, planned spend of the pupil premium plus, including costings and impact
- following the writing of a PEP, implement the educational recommendations in the PEP action plan ensuring that all relevant staff are clear about their responsibilities and tasks
- manage and review the PEP within expected timescales. The PEP will be reviewed termly and more frequently updated if required, e.g. change of care placement, action plan needs modifying, etc
- circulate the PEP and PEP reviews to relevant people within 10 working days

Additional or Special Educational Needs or Disability

We will:

- quickly identify additional needs and make appropriate provision within school resources
- ensure equal access to additional interventions
- ensure looked after children and previously looked after children are prioritised for referrals to the school's educational psychologist, Learning Support Service and other agencies where appropriate
- ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise underachievement and intervene at an early stage
- contact the virtual school as soon as concerns start to emerge
- collate all relevant paperwork and evidence if an EHCP assessment is likely to be required

Admissions and Transitions

We will:

- ensure that all applications for new admissions or transfers are processed through Stockport's admissions team
- ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience
- prioritise looked after children and previously looked after children within school's own admissions procedures and aim to admit pupils in less than 20 days (if appropriate), following an education planning meeting as requested by the admissions team, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for looked after children and previously looked after children

Attendance

We will:

- celebrate good attendance and encourage all parties concerned to continually promote good attendance
- establish a 'first day of absence' procedure where attendance becomes a problem
- inform the social worker when a child is absent for three consecutive days or more
- ensure that the school's attendance officer communicates with the virtual school link teacher who may contact school to query attendance data

Exclusion

We will:

- identify any looked after child or previously looked after child who is at risk of exclusion and contact virtual school, education access team, social worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the looked after child or previously looked after child missing days from school
- aim to avoid exclusion of a looked after child or previously looked after child whenever possible
- ensure, in the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion, that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the social worker have been informed. Within one day a letter has been sent specifying the excluded period, the reasons for the exclusion, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representation to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements which will enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education
- in the event of any exclusion, give details of the reasons for the exclusion to virtual school so that an appropriate response can be made

Please see the virtual school website <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/virtual-school-for-children-incare> for further guidance