

St Matthew's High Brooms CE Primary School

Powder Mill Lane
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN4 9DY



Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Headteacher: Claire Harris
Chair of Governors: Lynn MacKay

Ratified: Nov 2024 (updated May 2025)
Next Review: Nov 2025

Policy written by: Carolyn Pollard

Fulfilling God-given potential

*Distinctive Christian values-
Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility*

Introduction

We are aware that Looked After Children constitute a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taken into Public Care, but that they are also individuals and members of other groups. We will take this into account when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatization.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

Objectives

Looked After Children at St Matthew's school will:

- receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support
- have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

Teachers and other staff in this school will:

- receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and psychological well-being of Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them
- plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children

The Looked After Designated Teacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place
- ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
- ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies

1. Induction

To ensure a supportive and sympathetic induction for Looked After Children admitted to our school, the following arrangements are in place:

- Children and their carers will be invited into school to meet with the Headteacher and or SLT/SENDCo in the first instance.
- The child and carers will be shown around school, introduced to staff and introduced to their prospective class teacher and peers.
- A taster visit will be encouraged so they spend time with their class teacher and peers before they are admitted full time. During this visit the child will be supported by a carer or known adult for as long as necessary to ensure the child feels safe and secure.
- The Head Teacher and/or the designated teacher (Mrs Carolyn Pollard) will meet with all carers and professionals involved with the child before entry to the school
- If the child has already been in an educational establishment then the Headteacher will liaise with the previous school.
- An individual plan for transition into the school will be developed by the Headteacher, designated teacher, professionals and carers to ensure a smooth transition.
- All teachers will be made aware of the child's needs and key adults in their life such as carers, support workers and other professionals.

2. Pastoral Support

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support the following arrangements are in place:

Mrs Carolyn Pollard, the designated teacher for Looked After Children will:

- ensure that staff are aware of any looked after children in school, know who the carer is, and whether parents have parental rights so they know who should receive copies of newsletters reports etc.
- ensure that key people who have authorisation to collect the child from school are clearly known by the main office and by staff involved with the child.
- liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings.
- work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after children receive their entitlement.
- ensure that records and plans are kept and maintained appropriately
- provide information to the Governing Body and LA about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils on the school roll
- secure training for the designated teacher or others as appropriate to ensure that the school can meet the needs of looked after pupils

3. Information

The Designated Teacher will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include a personalised provision plan if in place.

Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these.

If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Designated Teacher of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information, to be determined by the designated teacher.

- All essential information on the child will be kept securely
- The information on this sheet will be shared with all members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If not already in place, a personalised provision plan will be completed at the earliest opportunity.

The Designated Teacher will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is in order to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school. The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the young person.

Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:

- Termly Pupil Progress Information Meetings
- Termly Tracking of progress and inclusion of interventions if necessary
- Parent Consultations (twice a year)
- A written report will be completed in the Summer Term by the class teacher
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors termly
- Termly meeting will be held with carers and all professional involved with the child in order to review progress / impact / next steps of Personalised Education Plan (PEP)
- All children in school including Looked After Children are tracked on a termly basis. Progress is tracked and interventions are arranged if required.
- Looked After Children will be tracked and their progress will be analysed against other children in school to ensure they are making progress in line with their peers. Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected and shared at the PEP meeting.

4. Strategies

4.1 Curriculum

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The Designated Teacher will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff
- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties
- Talk to the child

We recognise that there are factors which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as highly as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that under-achievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results.

When required professional agencies involvement will be sought by Mrs Carolyn Pollard alongside SENDco (Miss Ani Hadjicosta). The school is aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark special events e.g. Mother's Day or to investigate family history during ILAs, may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities.

4.2 Attendance

A Looked After Child's attendance will be monitored

- Any absence is followed up and attendance is monitored as part of Needs meetings
- This information will be analysed to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.
- Attendance information is shared at the termly PEP meetings.

4.3 Behaviour

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by Mrs Carolyn Pollard as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.
- The staff will follow the school behaviour policy. The strategies including within these documents take into account all children's needs.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, PRS and The Virtual School will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the challenging behaviour.

We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements.

4.4 Homework

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete homework, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so. Class teachers will be aware of the needs of Looked After Children when setting and monitoring homework.

4.5 Extra-Curricular Activities

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school-based activities because of poor

relationships with their peers, for example. As we believe it is essential that Looked After Children are able to play a full part in school life, the following strategies are in place to help them to do this:

- The Designated Teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities and will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities through meetings. The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiative will be monitored and evaluated by:
- Collection and analysis of information
- Discussion with school staff, carers, Social Workers and staff from LA Support Services, both informally and during meetings e.g. those set up to write Individual Education Plans
- Discussions with Looked After Children
- Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of school strategies lies with the senior leadership team.

5. Liaison with outside agencies

To ensure that all those involved in the education and care of Looked After Children work together in their best interests, the Designated Teacher will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for:

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives
- Attend Termly PEP meetings with other professionals associated with the child.
- Participation in and co-ordination of Review and Planning meetings for Looked After Children. Statutory school procedures such as Annual Reviews for children with EHCP will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible and appropriate.

In addition, school management will do everything possible to enable class teachers or other appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Designated Teacher is Mrs Carolyn Pollard

The role of the Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school.

The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Designated Teacher will:

- Attend training sessions organised by the LA
- Cascade this training to school staff
- Arrange and/or deliver training to all staff, including those newly appointed, on issues affecting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and the ways in which educational disadvantage can be overcome
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register
- Work closely with Social Workers and other LA staff to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans.
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to their PEP

6.2 The Headteacher and SLT

The responsibility for the educational and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Headteacher, although some of the day-to-day tasks may be delegated to other staff. Working with the Senior Leadership Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Designated Teacher, are enabled to carry them out.

6.3 The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Jon Barker.

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis on Looked after Children as part of the child protection and safeguarding review.

The named governor must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory assessments
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities

7. Evaluation

The general success and appropriateness of this policy will be evaluated annually. In addition, we will monitor and analyse the impact of this policy on pupils, staff and parents of different ethnic groups. The results of the evaluation will be passed to the school Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children before being presented to the Governing Body.

Relevant documents regarding LAC;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>