Charter Academy

Looked After Children Policy

Local Level Policy

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Author	Laura Drew – Deputy Headteacher
Date	**Notes**

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Legislation and Statutory guidance
3. Definitions
4. Identity of our designated teacher
5. Role of the designated teacher
6. Role and responsibilities of all staff
7. Monitoring Arrangements
8. Links with other policies

1. Introduction

The staff and governors of Charter Academy are committed to providing high-quality education for all pupils. We recognise the educational vulnerability of looked-after and previously looked-after children and align our practice with current DfE statutory guidance (2018) on designated teachers and promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is informed by the Department for Education's statutory guidance *The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children* (DfE, 2018), which sets out the legal duties and responsibilities of schools and designated teachers in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

In addition, this policy is aligned with the safeguarding requirements set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE 2025), which identifies looked-after children as a vulnerable group requiring robust safeguarding measures, effective information sharing, and coordinated multi-agency support.

This policy reflects the statutory duties set out in the **Children Act 1989** and **Children Act 2004**, which require schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare and educational achievement of looked-after children, ensuring that every child is supported to "achieve and reach their full potential." It also acknowledges the responsibilities placed on local authorities through the **Children and Young Persons Act 2008**, including duties relating to care planning and the provision of appropriate arrangements for looked-after children.
In addition, the policy aligns with the Department for Education's most up-to-date statutory guidance, including:

- **The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE, 2018)**, which outlines the responsibilities of schools and governing bodies in promoting educational achievement and providing appropriate pastoral support.
- **Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE, 2018)**, which sets the framework for the role of Virtual School Heads and defines the collective responsibilities of local authorities, schools, and partner agencies.

Together, these statutory frameworks establish the shared corporate parenting responsibilities of **local authorities, Virtual Schools, governing bodies, and education settings**, ensuring that all organisations work collaboratively to secure the best possible outcomes for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
These duties emphasise the principles that underpin effective support for looked-after children, including:

- **Prioritising education**
- **Maintaining high expectations and aspirations**
- **Promoting inclusion and challenging stigma**

- **Ensuring continuity and stability in education and care**
- **Taking early and proactive intervention**
- **Listening to the voices, views, and experiences of children and young people**

These principles reflect the government's wider commitment to championing the educational attainment and wellbeing of looked-after and previously looked-after children

3. Definitions

Looked-after children 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. Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased 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 card for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.
- Subject to a **care order** under the Children Act 1989.
- **Accommodated** under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (a voluntary arrangement with parents).

LAC may be placed:

- With foster carers
- In residential homes
- With relatives
- In other LA-approved accommodation

Previously Looked-after Children (PLAC)

A *previously looked-after child* is a pupil who:

1. **Was looked after by a local authority**, **but then ceased to be so** because they became the subject of one of the following orders:
    - **Adoption order**
    - **Special guardianship order (SGO)**
    - **Child arrangements order** (specifying with whom the child is to live)
2. **OR appears to the governing board to have been in state care outside England and Wales**, **because they would not otherwise have been cared for adequately**, and
   ceased to be in that care as a result of being adopted.

PLAC remain eligible for specialist support (e.g. advice from the Virtual School Head) under the 2018 statutory framework.

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child'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) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across school 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 previously looked-after children.

4. Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is Mrs Laura Drew (Deputy Headteacher)
Charter Academy School, Mitchell Avenue ,Coventry CV4 8DW
Telephone: 02476 4663691

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

5. Role of the designated teacher

a. Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on role by:
    - Working with VSHs
    - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
    - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children
    - 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities.
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children 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.
- Work 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.
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

b. Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs 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.
- Monitor and track how looked-after children'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 relevance local authority
- decide what arrangements work best for pupils.
- Ensure that a looked-after child'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.
- Ensure that 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.
- Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version.

c. Supporting both looked-after and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding.
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can be most effectively used to improve attainment.
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children.
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children.
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries about is use.
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEND) of looked-after and previously looked□after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this,
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed.
- Make sure PEPs work in agreement with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have.
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEND issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services.

d. Relationships with other professionals, carers, parents and guardians

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- 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 previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education.
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEND departments.
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:
    - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about education progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans.
    - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children 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 do to minimise disruption.
    - Making sure that, if a looked-after child 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 previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians.
- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
    - 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 looked-after child 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 previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of all staff

All staff will;

- as with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- ensure entry to examinations for looked-after and previously looked-after children;

- be familiar with the Guidance on Children in Care and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Child in Care is experiencing difficulty;

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by LAC Designated Teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

• Child protection and safeguarding
• SEN