

Newton Primary School



Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy

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Designated Teacher	Mrs Ashleigh Booth
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Headteacher	Mrs. Sarah Hughes
Chair of Governors	TO BE CONFIRMED

Policy Aims

Newton Primary School is committed to promoting the educational achievement, wellbeing, stability and inclusion of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure a suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children and support all staff to do the same;
- ensure that the individual needs, experiences and circumstances of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood and appropriately supported;
- ensure staff, parents, carers, guardians and relevant professionals know who the Designated Teacher is, how to contact them and what their responsibilities are;
- support looked-after and previously looked-after children to participate fully in school life, make strong progress and develop high aspirations.

1. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance for designated teachers for looked-after and previously looked-after children and the statutory guidance on promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children. It also takes account of relevant duties under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, the Children Act 1989 and associated regulations.

The school will also have regard to current safeguarding, SEND, attendance, suspension and exclusion, and pupil premium guidance where these relate to looked-after and previously looked-after children.

2. Definitions

2.1 Looked-after children

A looked-after child is a child who is:

- 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.

2.2 Previously looked-after children

A previously looked-after child is a child who was looked after by a local authority, or was in state care outside England and Wales, and ceased to be looked after because they became subject to an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order, or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

2.3 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The PEP forms part of a looked-after child's care plan and is developed in partnership with the school and other professionals. It records the child's educational needs, targets, provision, responsibilities and agreed actions so that everyone is clear about what needs to happen to help the child achieve their potential.

PEPs are reviewed regularly, normally at least termly. The Designated Teacher will use the relevant local authority's PEP system and will familiarise themselves with the arrangements of another local authority where a child is placed from outside Derbyshire.

2.4 Virtual School Head (VSH)

The Virtual School Head is a local authority officer with responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children looked after by that authority. The VSH also provides information and advice in relation to previously looked-after children.

3. Role of the Designated Teacher

3.1 Leadership responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will:

- act as the central point of contact within school for matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll;
- ensure staff understand factors that may affect learning, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and achievement;
- contribute to the development and review of whole-school policies so that the needs of these pupils are appropriately considered;
- promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are supported to engage with learning and wider school life;
- provide advice and support to teachers and other staff;
- work directly with children, carers, parents and guardians to strengthen home-school relationships and encourage high aspirations;
- take lead responsibility for the development, implementation and quality of looked-after children's PEPs;
- work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead so that safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly and effectively;
- involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

3.2 Supporting looked-after children

The Designated Teacher will:

- work with teachers and professionals to assess each child's educational needs and ensure the PEP reflects those needs;
- lead the target-setting process and ensure targets are specific, ambitious, measurable and regularly reviewed;
- monitor attainment, progress, attendance, engagement and wider outcomes;
- work with the child and relevant adults to agree next steps where progress is not on track;
- ensure agreed PEP actions and provision are implemented and reviewed for impact;
- ensure the PEP is current and reviewed in time to inform the statutory review of the child's care plan;
- make clear what has been implemented, what remains outstanding and what additional resources or support may be needed;
- ensure the most recent PEP is available to the social worker and relevant Virtual School in line with local arrangements;
- support the secure and timely transfer of an up-to-date PEP and relevant educational information when a child changes school.

3.3 Supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children

The Designated Teacher will:

- ensure staff understand the specific educational and pastoral needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- work with the relevant Virtual School to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can be used effectively;
- ensure decisions about pupil premium for previously looked-after children are informed by the child's needs and involve parents or guardians appropriately;
- be the main point of contact for parents and guardians who have questions about support or pupil premium;
- ensure teachers understand relevant issues relating to attendance, homework, behaviour, transitions and future aspirations;
- work closely with the SENDCo where a child has, or may have, special educational needs or disabilities;
- ensure PEPs and Education, Health and Care Plans, where applicable, are coherent and mutually supportive;
- support staff to identify possible SEND or social, emotional and mental health needs and to access further support where appropriate;

- ensure the child's voice, wishes and feelings are appropriately captured and used to inform planning and support.

4. Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus

Newton Primary School recognises that additional funding for looked-after and previously looked-after children is intended to improve educational outcomes. Funding will be used in a needs-led, evidence-informed way and linked, where appropriate, to PEP targets, identified barriers and intended impact.

- For looked-after children, the Virtual School Head manages the allocation of pupil premium funding and the school will work with the relevant Virtual School to agree its effective use.
- For previously looked-after children, pupil premium funding is paid to the school and will be used to address identified educational needs and barriers.

The school will not assume that all looked-after or previously looked-after children have the same needs. Decisions will be based on the individual pupil and reviewed for impact.

5. Safeguarding, Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Looked-after and previously looked-after children may have experienced disruption, loss, trauma or adversity. Newton Primary School will maintain high expectations while providing sensitive, trauma-aware and individualised support where needed.

- Safeguarding concerns will be reported immediately in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, social workers, carers and relevant professionals.
- The school will be clear about who holds parental responsibility, who may make decisions and what information may be shared with whom.
- Information about a child's care status will be treated sensitively and shared only with staff who need it in order to support the child effectively and safely.

6. Relationships Beyond the School

The Designated Teacher will:

- proactively engage with social workers, carers, parents, guardians, Virtual School staff and other professionals;
- clarify with social workers how school should engage with birth parents and other adults where this is relevant;
- be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage their active involvement in education;
- build effective links with local authority services, including the Virtual School and SEND services;
- work with relevant professionals to maximise educational stability and minimise disruption arising from changes in care placement or school;
- ensure the relevant Virtual School is informed promptly where a looked-after child has unauthorised absence, in line with local procedures and safeguarding expectations;
- seek the views of the social worker and relevant professionals where placement changes may disrupt education;
- ensure a receiving school's Designated Teacher receives appropriate information to support a safe and successful transition;
- seek advice from the Virtual School about the needs of a previously looked-after child with the agreement of their parent or guardian;
- ensure staff know who can give consent or sign permissions for individual children where this differs from usual arrangements.

7. Suspension, Exclusion and Behaviour Support

The school will seek to understand and address the underlying causes of behaviour and will consider appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where relevant.

- Where a looked-after child is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher will involve the relevant Virtual School Head as early as possible.
- The school will work with the Virtual School, social worker and carers to consider what assessment, provision or support may address the causes of the child's behaviour.
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will involve the child's parents or guardians and may seek advice from the Virtual School with their agreement.

8. Attendance and Educational Continuity

The school will monitor the attendance and punctuality of looked-after and previously looked-after children carefully, recognising the importance of educational continuity and belonging. Concerns will be addressed promptly through school attendance procedures and through liaison with carers, social workers, the Virtual School and other professionals as appropriate.

9. Staff Awareness and Training

The Designated Teacher will maintain appropriate knowledge and undertake relevant training. Staff will receive information, advice or professional development proportionate to their role so that they can understand and support the educational needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The Governing Board will ensure that the Designated Teacher has sufficient time, authority, training and access to information to carry out the role effectively.

10. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of provision for looked-after and previously looked-after children will be monitored through appropriate school systems, including PEP review, attainment and progress information, attendance, safeguarding and pastoral information, pupil voice and the impact of additional support.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher and governors, or earlier where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local arrangements.

11. Related Policies and Guidance

- Department for Education: Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - statutory guidance.
- Department for Education: Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - statutory guidance.
- Department for Education: Pupil premium allocations and conditions of grant.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Newton Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Newton Primary School SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.
- Newton Primary School Behaviour Policy.
- Newton Primary School Attendance Policy.
- Newton Primary School Pupil Premium Strategy.