



Strong Close Nursery School

Reviewed March 2022
Approved by governors March 2022

Designated Teacher and Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After Policy

Introduction

Strong Close Nursery School is committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. 'Looked After' or 'Child Looked After' (CLA) is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. Our governing body is committed to ensuring that our Designated Teacher and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- All staff and governors are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in our care to achieve and reach their full potential.
- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

It also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

Children Act (2004). This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and associated guidance on the education of Children Looked After. The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- Prioritizing education;
- Having high expectations;

- Inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes;
- Achieving continuity and stability;
- Early intervention – priority action; and
- Listening to children.

The Guidance introduced two key measures:

- To ensure designated Teachers are nominated in every school

To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all Children Looked After.

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 to be 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 cared for adequately, and
 - Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child’s care plan that is developed with the school from the age of three. 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 schools 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 and Named Governor for Safeguarding and Children Looked After

Our designated teacher is Helen Jones the Headteacher

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 of the matters set out in the section below.

Our named Governor for Safeguarding and Children Looked After is Jill Gilhome.

Governing bodies should, through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the PP+ is used) and their level of progress. In some schools, designated teachers do this by providing the governing body with a regular report.

5. Role of the designated teacher

5.1 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 roll by:
 - Working with VSHs
 - Promoting a whole-school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- 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 and deputies 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

5.2 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 assess 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 relevant 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
 - 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
 - The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

5.3 Supporting both looked-after children 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 plus funding
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and how to support them
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging parents to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure other staff 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 harmony 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 SEN 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 how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

5.4 Relationships beyond the school

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 SEN 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 educational 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 should 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

6. The roles and responsibilities of other staff

- As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement
- Promote the self-esteem of all CLA

- Maintain CLA's confidentially and ensure they are supported sensitively
- Respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of CLA
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Child who is Looked After is experiencing difficulty;

7. The role of the Governing Body

- The governing body of this school will:
- Ensure that admission criteria prioritise CLA, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Children in Care;
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Children Looked After;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body;
- For child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

10. Monitoring arrangements

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

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- SEN
- Admissions