

TEIGN SCHOOL

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

2026/27

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Background

"An educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. Effective schools are educationally inclusive schools. This shows, not only in their performance, but also in their ethos and their willingness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. This does not mean treating all pupils in the same way. Rather it involves taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs."

The above quote is taken from 'Evaluating Educational Inclusion – Guidance for Inspectors and Schools' (DfES 2000) and forms the rationale for this policy.

We are also aware that Looked After Children (LAC) 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.

Teign School strives for all students to feel a part of the school community and have access to the highest educational outcomes and opportunities.

Aim

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

Objectives

i) Looked After Children in this school will

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

ii) Teachers and other staff in this school will

- receive training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and 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

iii) The Designated Teacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will

- identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff
- develop 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.

The Designated Teacher will attend the previous school Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting (when a planned transfer is taking place) to ensure an effective transfer of information and to help the young person feel more familiar with key members of staff.

When a Looked After Child is transitioning mid-year or with less preparation a 'Planning for Success' meeting will take place with the Designated Teacher, Virtual School, Social Workers, Carers and the Young Person. This is a supportive meeting to plan support in preparation for transition to Teign. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting will also take place within 10 school days of the young person arriving at Teign.

2. Pastoral Support

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

Looked After Children will have first contact with their form tutor on a daily basis. They also have access to wellbeing officers as a first point of call for LAC. Wider support services within school include the Designated Teacher and Inclusion teams.

We engage with external agencies including Educational Psychologists, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) teams, the Virtual School, school-based counsellors and trauma informed practitioners to provide pastoral support. We will engage further professionals should a need arise through discussions at PEP meetings.

3. Information

- The Designated Teacher will gather information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and share with relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the Teacher will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.
- All LAC looked after by Devon will have a PEP held within 10 working days of the child joining Teign School's role.

- Information regarding Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. When no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who have direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of their circumstances. If there are learning or behaviour concerns, the Designated Teacher and Inclusion team will inform all staff of the strategies in place or if the young person is facing specific challenges. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information as determined by the Designated Teacher
- Essential information will be recorded on CPOMS. PEP minutes will be available on the online portal (ePEP). Details of parental responsibility will be held by the Designated Teacher and the Data teams to ensure accuracy. In all cases the Designated Teacher should be contacted if there are any questions or issues.
- The Designated Teacher will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances, emphasising that this information is intended to facilitate collaboration among the people involved in their lives and support their progress 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:
 - Via usual data drop points three times per year through data systems
 - Via teacher reporting as part of the PEP and IRO process direct to the Designated Teacher
 - External examinations
 - Information about the progress of LAC in Teign School will be shared as part of governor reports. It will also be shared with the Virtual School and carers.
- This information will be analysed by the Designated Teacher to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.
- If there are concerns raised about the progress of LAC as a result of the data collection then the Designated Teacher is responsible for coordinating a response to this by liaising with teachers, carers, TAs as appropriate.
- Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:
 - Attendance officers will record data on a daily basis
 - SLT lead will monitor attendance of LAC as a group.
 - Designated teacher will report attendance to the Virtual School at every PEP
 - When a LAC attendance drops to 96% then interventions and support will be recorded.
 - This information will be analysed by SLT Lead for attendance and Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.
- Information about the behaviour of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:
 - Classcharts records will be analysed to look at patterns of demerits and behavior at least every ½ term with a focus on minor and major infringements

- Teachers, tutors and support staff are reminded regularly of the role of Designated Teacher and will report significant behavior concerns directly.
- This information will be analysed by The Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion so early intervention can take place.

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:

- Designated Teacher along with the SENCo (if they are different people) 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
- The Graduated Response will be used to identify need and support progress as outlined in the SEND policy and specified in law through the SEND Code of Practice
- Concerns about a LAC academic progress will be immediately reported to carers and the Virtual School to ensure timely intervention

We acknowledge that various factors may hinder Looked After Children from reaching their full potential, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To address this, we will track the academic progress of each child and compare it to their previous results, ensuring that any underachievement is identified. If their progress is not as expected, we will provide support through both in-class and out-of-class interventions, reward trips, and access to the curriculum using technology. Additionally, a mentor will be assigned to foster positive relationships and enhance self-esteem related to learning. Additionally, a mentor will also be used to help build positive relationships and boost self-esteem in relation to learning.

We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark Mothers' Day or to investigate family history, may pose challenges for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities where appropriate.

4.2 Attendance

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Designated Teacher to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- We will continue to work with the School Education Welfare Officer who will be involved fully in planning and delivering strategies to improve attendance

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 Head of Year or Designated Teacher will promptly notify the Social Worker and carers when behavior problems are identified or if there are significant changes in the child's behavior.
- If the problem continues, a meeting will be arranged with the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services (e.g. Educational Psychology Service, SEMH team and the virtual school) along with appropriate school staff. The purpose of the meeting is to devise supportive strategies that can reduce the problematic behavior. The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with the Designated Teacher.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are more prone to exclusion compared to the general school population, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring we build positive relationships, deploy Individual Behaviour Plans that focus on relationships for learning and ensure we have a holistic understanding of any other needs.
- If a fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion is a possibility for a Looked After Child the virtual school and carers will be contacted in order to meet and problem solve in order to reduce the possibility of this happening.

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. The following strategies are in place to help Looked After Children complete homework tasks as set for their peers.

- Prioritised invitations to homework support sessions, arranged via phone calls to carers
- Access to intervention services at school to support homework completion.

4.5 Extra-Curricular Activities

We recognise that Looked After Children face barriers to participating in extra-curricular activities due to transport arrangements and social difficulties. 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 using the data drops.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities through the PEP meetings and interim meetings.

- If the participation of Looked After Children in extracurricular activities is low, the Designated Teacher will coordinate with support services from the Virtual School to develop strategies for increasing their involvement.

4.6 Evaluation of strategies

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 the Virtual School, both informally and during meetings eg those set up to write Personal Education Plans
- Discussions with Looked After Children themselves

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of school strategies lies with the Headteacher.

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
- Liaising with Social Workers to ensure all Looked After Children have a Personal Education Plan
- Participation in and co-ordination of Review and Planning meetings for Looked After Children. Statutory school procedures such as Annual Reviews for children with Education, Health and Care Plans 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 The Designated Teacher is Alex Goldman

The role of the Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. For this reason, the person appointed will have protected release time to carry out the role.

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 Virtual School

- 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
- Ensure the involvement of careers staff with all young people in Years 10 and 11 who are looked-after
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register
- Work closely with Social Workers and other Virtual School staff to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans which will inform Care Plans
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to Social Care planning meetings
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans

6.2 The Headteacher and Senior Management

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. Along 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 to be confirmed at start of 2026/27 academic year

The named Governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of Looked After Children in the school
- A comparison of test scores for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Pupil destinations

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
- Public examinations
- Statutory assessments
- Careers guidance
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities
- Work experience

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.