



**Blewbury Endowed C of E Primary School**  
Westbrook Street, Blewbury, Didcot, Oxon. OX11 9QB  
Telephone: (01235) 850411



**Headteacher: Jo Reeder**

## **Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Policy**

Signed:

(Head teacher)

Signed:

(Chair of Governors)

<b>Approved by Governing Body:</b>	<b>March 2023</b>
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	<b>March 2024</b>

Our school is a place for all to belong. Through **love**, we nurture all to grow in their own unique way. We create an environment for all to flourish; to **forgive**, be **resilient** and **courageous**, making a difference to our community and the world beyond.

*Nurture • Grow • Flourish*

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### 1. Aims

Blewbury CofE Primary school aims to ensure that:

- › A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (also referred to as ‘children we care for’,)
- › The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- › Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for
- › Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning. Excellent practice in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children already exists in many schools. The designated teacher role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice becomes universal.
- › Attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non-looked-after children.
- › The support that Blewbury school and our designated teachers give to children who are looked-after and previously looked-after are not to be seen in isolation. All looked-after and previously looked-after children will have a wide range of support mechanisms that will assist in promoting their educational achievement. The child’s foster carer (or residential care worker), social worker or, for previously looked-after children, parents or guardian, will have day-to-day responsibilities for the child. Within the local authority, the VSH4 will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the school.
- › Looked after children (or previously looked after children) aren’t made to feel a sense of otherness in school by virtue of the existence or implementation of this policy.

### 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 Child and Young Persons Act 2008.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 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. 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

Our designated teacher is Miss Jo Reeder.

You can contact them by emailing [head.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:head.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk) or telephoning 01235 850411

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.

### 5. Role of the designated teacher

The following is based on the responsibilities listed in the [DfE's statutory guidance](#). Although the designated teacher must always have lead responsibility, at Blewbury school we delegate the following functions:

#### 5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher (Jo Reeder) will:

- Make sure that all looked after children (or previously looked after children) aren't made to feel a sense of otherness in school
- 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 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 following staff will:

- Make sure that all looked after children (or previously looked after children) aren't made to feel a sense of otherness in school (All staff )
- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs (Class teacher and SLT)
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs (Class teacher and SLT)
- Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs (Class teacher and SLT)
- 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 (Class teacher and SLT)
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place (Class teacher and SLT)
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils (Designated teacher)
- 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 (Designated teacher)

## 5.3 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The following staff 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 (Designated teacher)
- › Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment (Designated teacher)
- › Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children (Designated teacher)
- › Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children (Designated teacher)
- › 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 its use (Designated teacher)
- › 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 (Designated teacher)
- › Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this (SEND Lead)
- › Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to looked-after children, is followed (SEND Lead)
- › Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have (SEND Lead)
  
- › 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 (SEND Lead)
- › 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 (SLT)
- › Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs (SLT)
- › Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children (SLT)

## 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
- 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. 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 and exclusions
- Child protection and safeguarding
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical needs