Children Looked After Policy

Policy Creation & Review	
Author(s)	Headteacher (*based on Newham Virtual School policy)*
Last review date	November 2025
Ratified by Governing Body	November 2021
Previous Review Date(s)	October 2024 November 2025 November 2026
Next Review Date	November 2027

Please note that this policy also pertains to practice in our Little Ellies Childcare. Therefore the term 'school' is used to cover all of these provisions.

1. Rationale

This policy describes our approach to meeting the requirements set out in:

- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 - section 20, and section 20A inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Academies Act 2010 - section 2E inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Designated Teacher (DT) for looked-after (CLA) and previously looked-after pupils (PCLA) (England) Regulations 2009

2. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- 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
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

3. Definitions

3.1 Looked after children

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

3.2 Previously looked after children

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

3.3 Personal education plan (PEP)

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.

3.4 Virtual school head (VSH)

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority-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.

The Name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children for the school:

- Janice Owen-Amadasun (Headteacher)
- Sheleena Laskar (Childcare Manager) supports this for Little Ellies Childcare

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

Within School Systems:

- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated;
- To advise on the most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the Personal Education Planning meeting.
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding where relevant is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced.
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children and young people 'in care' and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To inform relevant members of school staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Newham Virtual School and Social Care and birth parents where appropriate
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date, used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- To track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium funding to accelerate progress,
- To intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy;
- To inform the planning and where relevant, transition for children looked after post 16.
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them.
- To report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis (preferably each term) on the outcomes for looked after children
- To have completed the Newham Designated Teachers' training and to attend other training as appropriate
- To support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with looked after children

Work with Individual Looked After Children

- To discuss with individual children, with the social worker and educational advisor and a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;

- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To ensure that the Pupil consultation section of the Newham Personal Education Plan is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the student are faithfully represented in the PEP;
- To ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new looked after child into the school.
- To develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies

Liaison:

- To develop good communication with Newham Virtual School and Social Care staff so that the Personal Education Plan is supported by the child's Care Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to PEP meetings, care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- To be named contact for colleagues in Newham Virtual School and Children's Social Care;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school role to the Virtual School as requested

Training:

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.
- To attend Newham Designated Teachers training and participate in the DT Forum to share good practice.
- To develop knowledge of procedures by attending training events organised by the Children's Social Care, the Virtual School or local Designated Teachers groups,
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from the Newham Virtual School, DfE or other research or policy.

4. Governor

The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children in the school: Marie Christie

The role of that governor

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked after pupils in the school;
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations after leaving the school

This report should be forwarded to Newham Virtual School.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:

- The curriculum;

- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. One to One tuition
- Careers guidance;
- Extra curricular activities;
- Work experience; and
- The most effective use of the Pupil Premium to raise attainment

The named Governor is encouraged to support the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with looked after children to ensure and confirm the schools' best practice.

The named Governor will be expected to have completed training on working with looked after children in school.

5. Whole School Responsibility

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is in care only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Headteacher or the Designated Teacher.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker/Advisory Teacher as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school induction will take place.

Involve the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, the Advisory Teacher and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Consultation section of the Personal Education Plan to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child when they may be asked about home situations,by other pupils in the playground for instance.

6. Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. End of year reports) are forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School.

Schools and education and social work colleagues within Children's Social Care should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual or a Statement Review and a Personal Education Plan meeting or review where at all possible.

It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if school is considering a change of course, there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision eg; behaviour or attendance.

7. Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker, the Advisory Teacher and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of focus and include targets and associated action to improve the student performance or educational achievement. Areas for consideration will include:

- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).
- Educational Data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any);
- Attendance;
- Behaviour;

The PEP will be updated and reviewed three times a year or at the point of any major change and will contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan.

The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all children looked after against the key indicators outlined above.

*Education Law defines who is a parent very widely. It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. This means it is possible for someone who does not have parental responsibility to be a 'parent' because they have care of the child in question, for example the foster carer.

Section 576 Education Act 1996

Children Act 1989 (amended)

Children and families Act 2014

'If this were my child' (Local Government Information Unit 2003)

The Pupil, Premium: How schools are using the pupil premium to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils (DfE 2012)