

# Looked After Children Policy



**Approved by:** Priory Rise School Governing Board

**Date:** October 2020

**Next review due by:** May 2022

## **Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy**

### **Introduction:**

Priory Rise School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils. Nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential foster care, when compared with their peers and it is our aim to support these children in full, to achieve their academic potential.

### **Who are Looked After Children?**

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989. This may be for a number of reasons and may be either a temporary or permanent arrangement.

Children may be looked after because parents are ill, missing or unable to cope. Parents will retain parental responsibility.

A child will be placed in care if a court has ordered a care order if it believes a child to be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority. However, it may be shared between the local authority and the parents.

### **Looked After Children may (or may not) have the following issues:**

- Low self esteem;
- Poor educational attainment (due to missing substantial periods of education);
- Delayed social, emotional and/or cognitive development;
- Be bullied or bully others;
- Be prone to poor mental health;
- Be isolated and struggle to make and maintain friendships;
- Have behavioural issues;
- Poor attachment to others.

Children who are looked after are therefore an extremely vulnerable group. Priory Rise School are committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible. This will be achieved by:

- Appointing a member of staff to the role of Designated Teacher;
- Ensuring Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all Looked After Children;
- Ensuring all staff have a clear understanding of Looked After Children's needs;
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the importance of confidentiality surrounding Looked After Children;
- Having effective strategies in places to support the educational needs of this vulnerable group.

### **Role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher:**

The Designated Teacher will be a member of the leadership team at Priory Rise. They will:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- Ensure that Looked After Children that are new to the school receive a sufficient induction;
- Ensure that they are aware of specific requirements, including care status;
- Ensure that a personal education plan (PEP) is completed within schedules outlined by the relevant local authority. (This is usually within 21 days of a child joining school and then on a 6 monthly basis thereafter);
- Work in partnership with the Looked After Child's social worker and Virtual School advocate to prepare and complete the PEP;
- Monitor and track progress against PEP targets and ensure they are well informed for both PEP meeting and Care reviews;
- Co-ordinate support for the child in school;
- Work with other professionals and outside agencies where necessary;
- Ensure teaching staff are aware of any Looked After Children's needs;
- Ensure that carers receive up-to-date information from school regarding meetings being held in school;
- Ensure that communication between school and carers is regular and positive;
- Ensure that Looked After Children have access to extra-curricular activities;
- Seek support and initiate meetings should any Looked After Children display any challenging behaviour and/or is at risk of being excluded;
- Ensure that progress and attainment data is reported to Governors and Milton Keynes local authority annually.

### **Role and responsibility of all staff:**

At Priory Rise, all relevant staff will have an understanding of what it means for a child to be Looked After. All staff will:

- Ensure that confidentiality for Looked After Children is maintained;
- Be familiar with, and work in partnership with the Designated Teacher, to complete necessary reviews and additional paperwork for review meetings;
- Have high educational aspirations for Looked After Children;
- Ensure the school's behaviour policy is followed with Looked After Children;
- Promote high self-esteem for Looked After Children.

### **Role and responsibility of the Governing Board:**

- Ensure all governors are aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children;
- Be aware of the number of Looked After Children on roll;
- Ensure that there is a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children appointed;
- Liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is able to carry out his/her responsibilities;
- Support the Head Teacher to ensure the needs of the Looked After Children are met;

- Review the academic attainment and progress of Looked After Children annually;
- Adopt and review the policy as necessary.

### **Confidentiality**

When working with Looked After Children, confidentiality is of vital importance. Information regarding Looked After Children will only be shared with those members of staff who need to know it in order to meet the needs of the children. The Designated Teacher will share relevant information with key members of staff after PEP meetings and Care review meetings.

### **Funding for Looked After Children:**

It is the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to monitor, and be able to justify, how Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding is spent for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Looked After Children are eligible to receive funding from the authority by which they are looked after to support Priory Rise School in meeting their educational needs. For Looked After children, PP+ funding is managed by the Virtual School Head for the purpose of supporting the child's educational achievement. The Virtual School Head and Priory Rise school, including the designated teacher, should work together to agree how this funding can most effectively be used to improve Looked After children's attainment. All PEPs should include information about how that looked-after child is benefitting from the use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.

For previously looked-after children, PP+ funding is managed by Priory Rise School. The amount a school receives is based on the number of eligible children recorded in the school's annual January School Census return to the Department for Education.

For both looked-after and previously looked-after children, PP+ funding should not be seen as a personal budget for individual children. The Virtual School Head and Priory Rise school manage their PP+ funding allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked-after, or previously looked-after children, and according to children's needs. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence based and in the best interests of the child.

At Priory Rise school, the PP+ funding is used to contribute towards:

- The provision of support staff to ensure all children are supported within whole class teaching;
- The provision of specialist teachers for PE, Music and Computing;
- The Learning Mentor provision.

Children eligible for PP+ funding also receive:

- Financial contributions towards school uniform;
- Financial support towards school clubs;
- Financial support towards peripatetic music lessons;
- Financial support towards school visits;
- Financial support toward the board and lodgings cost for any residential visit throughout Key Stage Two.

N.B: For previously looked-after children, the Virtual School are no longer acting as the part of their corporate parent: their role is limited to providing information and advice to parents and schools, including training to raise awareness and understanding of their needs. The designated teacher may, however, seek the advice of the Virtual School about meeting the needs of individual children with the agreement of the child's parents or guardians. It is, therefore, important that the designated teacher establishes a good working relationship with the Virtual School Head for their area.

For Milton Keynes schools:

- Rhian Williams – Head of Virtual School  
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- Marie Hinson – Previously Looked After officer  
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### **Exclusions:**

Where a looked after child is at risk of either fixed term or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher should contact the relevant authority's Virtual School 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.

Where a child is at risk of a fixed-term or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher, working with the Virtual School and the child's carers, should consider what additional assessment and support (such as additional help for the classroom teacher or one-to-one therapeutic work) needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for exclusion.

### **Transfer out of care:**

When children cease to be looked-after, their educational needs are unlikely to have changed significantly simply because their care status has changed. Although they will no longer be required to have a PEP, designated teachers will wish to consider what is best for continuity and meeting the child's educational needs.

This will particularly apply to those who leave care through adoption, Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangements Order, where the designated teacher has a duty to promote their educational attainment. As part of this, designated teachers should maintain links with Virtual School Head, who must make advice and information available to them for the purposes of promoting the educational achievement of this group of previously looked-after children.