



# Supporting Children who are Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Policy

In God's hands, we love, learn, grow and inspire

“What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like the mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on the earth. Yet, when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

Mark 4: 30-32

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## INTRODUCTION

The individual governing bodies of the schools within HMFA are committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children and previously Looked-After Children" (February 2018), The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009 and Section 20 of the Children Act 2008.

## **Definition**

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;

A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

## **Children who are "Looked After"**

Section 20 of the 2008 Act places the following duties on governing bodies:

- to designate a member of staff (the designated teacher) as having the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered pupils at the school;
- to ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training (section 20(2)); and
- the governing body and the designated teacher must have regard to this guidance and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009 require that the designated person is:

- a qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school (regulation 3(2)); or
- a head teacher or acting head teacher of the school (regulation 3(3)).

## **Previously looked-after children**

Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 place duties on the governing body of a maintained school in England and the proprietor of an academy in England to:

- designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after pupils who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training; and
- ensure they and the designated teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Designated teachers will want to satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support (Pupil Premium) by asking the child's parents for evidence of their previously looked-after status. For children adopted outside England and Wales, the child must have been looked after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, designated teachers will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, designated teachers could discuss eligibility with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to agree a consistent approach.

**Director/Governor Responsible:-** Safeguarding Director/Governor for school

**Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After:-** Headteacher, Head of School or Safeguarding Director

## **Aims**

To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

To support our looked-after and previously looked-after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school activities.

To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for looked-after and previously looked-after children as for all children.

To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of looked-after pupils are kept fully informed of the child's progress and attainment.

To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked- After Children, by asking the question, '**Would this be good enough for my child?**'

Our federation's approach to supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and well-being
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

## **In pursuit of this policy we will:-**

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school Director/Governor to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Children who are Looked After and Previously Looked After.

## **The role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for children who are looked after and previously looked after.**

The role became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Persons' Act 2008 (the 2008 Act).

Ideally, s/he should be a senior member of staff who has enough status and experience to advise and provide training to school staff on issues relating to looked-after and previously looked-after children. They need to be able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning of these children

### **Responsibilities in school:**

- Knowing who all the looked-after and previously looked-after children are in school and ensuring that availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- Attending relevant training about looked-after and previously looked-after children and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to them.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how looked-after and previously looked-after children should learn.
- Helping school staff understand the issues that affect the learning of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Making sure that looked-after and previously looked-after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers/parents understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Removing the barriers to learning for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensuring any looked-after and previously looked-after children new to the school are welcomed positively and assessed when they start at the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching.
- Developing personalised learning packages for looked after children in conjunction with the relevant teaching staff.
- Ensuring that the looked after children in school have a voice in setting learning targets for themselves.
- Championing looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Leading on developing and implementing the PEP within the school for looked-after children. The social worker is responsible for initiating the PEP process.
- Monitoring the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved.
- Ensuring the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred without delay.
- Liaising with the Virtual School in all aspects of the looked after child progress and support and previously looked-after child if needs be.
- Convening urgent multi-agency meetings if a looked after child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Arranging a mentor or key worker to whom the young person can talk to.
- Producing **at least one** annual report to the governing body which should include: current progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented and whether the actions put in place are effective in addressing the learning needs of child, training undertaken for carrying out the role effectively. The report must not mention the children's names for confidentiality reasons.
- Promoting good home-school links and the importance of education as a way of improving life chances for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

For more information please see:

***The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children 2018***

***Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools – Guidance for Schools***

**The role and responsibility of the governing body**

- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- In partnership with the head teacher, ensure that, through their training and development, the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand the respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Governing bodies and the SLT should make sure that the Designated Teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve.
- The governing body, in partnership with the head teacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the Designated Teacher.

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Directors/Director/Governors have regard to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children when reviewing them:

- Oversubscription criteria
- The school code of conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Racial Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

The school will champion the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with “The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children” February 2018