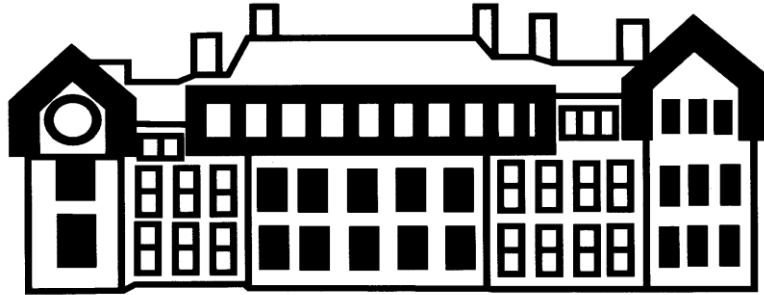


GORDON



SCHOOL

Policy for Supporting Children who are or have been Looked-After

Ratification date: November 2022

Review date: November 2024

Signed _____ Headteacher

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

Policy for supporting Children who are or have been Looked-After

See also: Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Photography & Recording of Images Policy
Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

Gordon Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. We recognise that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of *Looked-After* and *Previously Looked-After* children, when compared with their peers. The Governing Body is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance "The designated teacher for *Looked-After* and *Previously Looked-After* Children" (DfE February 2018).

Previously Looked-After children are included with *Looked-After* children within statutory guidance. This means that designated teachers need to satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support by asking the child's parents/carers for evidence of their previously *Looked-After* status. For children adopted outside England and Wales, the child must have been the responsibility of a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. Where parents/carers are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, designated teachers will need to use their discretion.

2. Terminology

A child is *Looked-After* by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours. (Section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014).

The general term for this, which most people understand, is that the child is in foster care.

A child is *Previously Looked-After* if:

- there has been an adoption order;
- there has been a special guardianship (SGO) or Care Arrangements order;
- they have been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales – this includes: section 20 - children removed from care of parents who then achieve permanence through an adoption or SGO/child arrangements order.

For the purposes of this policy the term ***Looked-After*** refers to *Looked-After* and *Previously Looked-After* Children

3. Why Looked-After Children need Support

Many *Looked-After* children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). 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 SEND, needs careful assessment and planning. Attainment data for *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 above factors make *Looked-After* children an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. The Governing Body of Gordon Primary School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following:

- There is a Designated Teacher for *Looked-After* children in place in the school;
- The Designated Teacher undertakes regular training;
- Regard to statutory guidance is adhered to.

4. The Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher **The Designated Teacher for *Looked-After* children in Gordon Primary School is Hannah Cuesta**

The Role of the Designated Teacher:

- To be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
- To have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every *Looked-After* child on the school's roll. This involves, working with the Virtual School's Headteacher to promote the education of *Looked-After* children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every *Looked-After* child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- To take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how *Looked-After* children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:
 - have high expectations of *Looked-After* children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
 - are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
 - understand how important it is to see *Looked-After* children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their *Looked-After* status;
 - have access to advice about teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are *Looked-After*;

- use Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short- and medium-term progress of *looked-after* children, and understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.
- To appreciate the central importance of the *Looked-After* child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
- To understand the role of social workers, Virtual School Headteachers and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and for previously *Looked-After* children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.
- To have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of *Looked-After* children, either directly or through appropriate delegation by contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:
 - they do not unintentionally put *Looked-After* and previously children at a disadvantage;
 - there is effective induction for *Looked-After* children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
 - there are effective procedures in place to support a *Looked-After* child's learning;
 - particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what they can achieve;
 - transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement;
 - when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously *Looked-After* children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract Pupil Premium+ funding;
 - there are no barriers to *Looked-After* children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. considering possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for *Looked-After* children to attend meetings).
- To promote a culture in which *Looked-After* children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning, and:

- are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
 - are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
 - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs;
 - can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in an open and honest manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
- To work directly with *Looked-After* children and their carers, parents or guardians to:
 - promote good home-school links;
 - support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and maths;
 - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
 - To have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of *Looked-After* children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary
 - To work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding *Looked-After* children are quickly and effectively responded to.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff

- To ensure that *Looked-After* children are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- To be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- To respond positively to *Looked-After* children requests to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- To contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- To ensure that no *Looked-After* child is stigmatised in any way;
- To provide a supportive climate to *Looked-After* children to achieve stability within the school setting;

- To have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of *Looked-After* children;
- To positively promote the self-esteem of *Looked-After* children.

4. The Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body

The Governing Body of this school will:

- ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for *Looked-After* children;
- be aware of whether the school has *Looked-After* children and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for *Looked-After* children;
- liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out their responsibilities in relation to *Looked-After* children;
- support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of *Looked-After* children are met;
- nominate a Governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the Governing Body. (These reports should not include any names of individual children for Child Protection and confidentiality reasons)
- review the effective implementation of this policy.

The Governor with special responsibility for Children who are *Looked-After* in the school: Anita Sheen

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 assessment data as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The number of suspensions / permanent exclusions; and

The named Governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that *Looked-After* pupils have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum;
- National examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress;
- Additional education support;
- Extra-curricular activities.

5. Confidentiality

It is important that all teaching and support staff who are in contact with the child are aware that they are *Looked-After*. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher.

6. Training

The Headteacher or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there is legislative change or if deemed necessary by the Governing Body.