

MAYBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Education of Children in Care Policy (Designated Teacher Policy)

Updated: Summer 2024





Policy on the Education of Children in Care (Looked after Children) (Designated Teacher Policy)

Mission Statement

Our values-based school nurtures curiosity and creativity through an inspiring, broad and engaging curriculum, where learning is at the heart of all that we do. Our children learn to become resilient and self-assured in an environment where safety is outstanding. Everyone is challenged and encouraged to thrive and achieve as individuals, preparing them for their role as caring and active citizens in modern Britain.

Vision Phrase:

Believe. Achieve. Succeed.

1 Introduction

Maybury Primary School believes that in partnership with Surrey County Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children in Care.

2 The aim of this policy:

To ensure that all stakeholders in our school are aware of how we can all work together 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 ensure that everyone is aware of how to support our Children in Care and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.

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

In Support of This Policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated teacher for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.

The designated teacher for Children in Care at Maybury Primary School is:

Mrs Della Sullivan

Assistant Headteacher

- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Children In Care in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.

The Nominated Governor for Children in Care at Maybury Primary School is:

Mrs Chris Cornish

Who are our Children in Care?

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.

Looked-after children

- Section 20 of the 2008 Children 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))
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009 require that the designated teacher 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;
 - ensure they and the designated teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has the power to make regulations to prescribe the necessary qualifications or experience of the designated member of staff for previously looked-after children.
- Designated teachers will want to satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support 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.
 - The governing body of at Maybury Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of Children in Care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000 and DfE Guidance 2014 (Promoting the Education of Children in Care) and the Children and Families Act 2014) The Children and Families Act places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to achieve to and reach their full potential. The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:
 - prioritising education;
 - having high expectations;
 - inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes;
 - achieving continuity and stability;
 - early intervention – priority action; and
 - listening to children.

The Guidance introduced two key measures:

- To ensure designated Teachers are nominated in every school
- To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all children in care.

Why looked-after and previously looked-after children need the support of a designated teacher?

- 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 (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. The designated teacher role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice is embedded throughout the school to enable high aspirations and promote achievement of looked after pupils alongside their peers.
- 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. Early identification and targeted intervention ensures appropriate support is in place to enable looked after children to make progress academically, socially and physically.
- The support that schools and designated teachers give to children who are looked-after and previously looked-after does not occur 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 Virtual School (VS) will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the school.

The Voice of the Child

Listening to the voice of looked-after and previously looked-after children is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs

Top 5 Tips for Designated Teachers on listening to the voice of the child

- Be available, take the time to get to know me
- Notice if I am upset or angry and listen to me when I need help
- Understand that even though I've had a different past than most people, it doesn't mean I need to be treated differently
- Understand my experience of being looked-after • Understand that my past will affect my present and my future behaviour even if I don't notice

The role of Governors:

The governing body of at Maybury Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of Children in Care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000 and DfE Guidance 2014 (Promoting the Education of Children in Care) and the Children and Families Act 2014) The Children and Families Act places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to achieve to and reach their full potential. The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- prioritising education;
- having high expectations;
- inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes;
- achieving continuity and stability;
- early intervention – priority action; and
- listening to children.
- Support the Designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Children in Care.

The Governing body will, through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the PP+ is used) and their level of progress. In some schools, designated teachers do this by providing the governing body with a regular report. The patchy nature in the numbers of looked-after and previously looked-after children in any one school means it would be best to have a flexible approach to providing such a report.

The role of the Designated Teacher

- Maintain an up to date record of all Children in Care who are on the school roll.
- This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEN Code of Practice – School Action/School Action Plus where appropriate
 - Child Protection information when appropriate.
 - Baseline information and all test results.
 - record of progress and interventions.
 - Attendance figures
 - Exclusions
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each child/young person to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school
- plan, e.g. Statement of Special Education Need, and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.
- Ensure that someone attends Children's Services Reviews on each child/young person and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with the Education Support Service for Children in Care on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of Children in Care.

- Ensure that if / when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children in Care where and when appropriate. Ensure that Children in Care, along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school. Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of Children in Care.
- Ensure that any Pupil Premium funding is carefully targeted at the appropriate Children in Care, to provide additional personalised support to improve their outcomes where appropriate.
- Report to the Governing body annually on the performance of the Children in Care who are on the roll of the school.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Funding

- Looked-after children and children adopted from care, on a special guardianship or child arrangements order are eligible for PP+ funding. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children and close the attainment gap between this group and their peers.
- All pupil premium spending should take account of the specific needs of eligible pupils. Whilst there will be some overlap with needs of economically disadvantaged children who attract the pupil premium, looked-after and previously looked-after children's needs can be very different to others eligible for Pupil Premium. The extra funding provided by the PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The designated teacher has an important role in ensuring the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by the school's staff and reflected in how the school uses PP+ to support these children.
- Children looked after by English local authorities and those previously looked after by an English or Welsh local authority are eligible for PP+ (this does not include children adopted from 'state care' outside England).
- PP+ funding is managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) for the purpose of supporting their educational achievement for looked-after children.
- The VSH and schools, 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 the child's 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+ is not a personal budget for individual children. The VSH and school manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked-after or previously looked-after children and according to children's needs.

Mental Health

- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.
- Designated teachers are not expected to be mental health experts; however, they have an important role in ensuring they and other school staff can identify signs of potential issues and understand where the school can draw on specialist services, such as CAMHS and educational psychologists. In addition, many schools have an officer responsible for making links with mental health services, with whom designated teachers can work closely. Where such an officer is available,
- Social, emotional and mental health is one of the four broad areas of children's SEND identified in Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 – 25 years (see Paragraph 5.32)
- The mental processes enabling us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. (Harvard University Centre on the Developing Child)
- designated teachers should work with specialist staff and the VSH to ensure that they, and other school staff, have the skills to:
 - identify signs of potential mental health issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable;
 - understand the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on looked-after and previously looked-after children and their ability to engage in learning.
- It is also important that the designated teacher, officer with responsibility for links with mental health services, where the school has one, and other school staff are aware that these issues will continue to affect previously looked-after children, and that the school will need to continue to respond appropriately to their needs.
- It is important to have a means of regularly measuring the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- In our school this is often done through the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).
- The SDQ is a clinically validated brief behavioural screening questionnaire for use with 4-17 year-olds or 2-4 year-olds. The SDQ can help social workers and other professionals form a view about a looked-after child's emotional well-being. It exists in three versions: for parents or carers, teachers and a self-evaluation for children aged 11-17. 57. Looked-after children may benefit from triangulation of the SDQ scores from their carer, teacher and, if they are aged 11 – 17, their self-evaluation to better inform the health assessment and PEP.
- Designated teachers should put in place robust arrangements to complete their element of the SDQ and engage with the relevant VSH and, where the school has one, the officer responsible for links with

mental health services regarding this. Designated teachers should use the results of the SDQ to help inform the child's PEP.

- For previously looked-after children, designated teachers should work with senior leaders in the school, the officer responsible for links with mental health services where the school has one, and parents and carers to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of this group of children.
- The SDQ could be applied to previously looked-after children and their parents where the child's parents or guardian supports its use.

All governors and staff will:

- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care.

This Policy will be reviewed on a 2 year cycle.