Backworth Park Primary School

Child in Care Policy

September 2026

Aims:

The school aims to ensure that:

A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for children in care and those children previously in care.

The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of children in care and children previously in care 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

Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for children in care and children previously in care. It also considers section 20 and section 20A of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008.

Definitions

Children in care children are registered students 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. Previously in care children are registered students 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

Personal education plan (PEP)

PEP is part of a children in care 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. Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's children in care children, working across schools to monitor and support these students 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 children previously in care children.

Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is Ms ElSaghier. You can contact her by phoning the school on 0191 815 8000. Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in care and children previously in care children at our school. She is your initial point of contact.

Role of the designated teacher

The designated teacher will: Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children in care and children previously in care children.

Promote the educational achievement of every children in care and children previously in care child on roll by:

- Working with VSHs
- Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand how children feel and issues that may affect children
- The things which can affect how children in care and children previously in care children learn and achieve
- How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of children in care and children previously in care children
- Promote a culture in which children in care and children previously in care children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with children in care and children previously in care children
- Work directly with children in care and children previously in care children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of children in care children's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children in care and children previously in care children are quickly and effectively responded to Involve parents and guardians of children previously in care children in decisions affecting their child's education

Supporting children in care children

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure children in care children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs
- Monitor and track how children in care children's attainment progresses under their PEPs
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for students
- Ensure that A children in care child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered. Make sure PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced. Ensure the updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan. They should transfer a children in care child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version.

Supporting both children in care children and children previously in care children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of children in care and children previously in care children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for children in care children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment

- Help raise the awareness of parents and carers of children previously in care children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support children previously in care children
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of children in care and children previously in care children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of children in care and children previously in care children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to children in care children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a children in care child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in children in care and children previously in care children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in children in care and children previously in care children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place arrangements to ensure that looked after children have their wishes and feelings recorded, and use the results of these to inform PEPs
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of children previously in care children

Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of children in care and children previously in care children
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of children previously in care children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for children in care children, such as: Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans; Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when children in care children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action; Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption; Making sure that, if a children in care child moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual children previously in care children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians.
- Make sure that for each children in care child: There's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
- School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents

- Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips
- Where a children in care child is at risk of exclusion: Contact the VSH 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; Working with the VSH and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour. Where a child or children previously in care child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or carers before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team