

# Policy for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The Local Governing Body of Portland Spencer Academy adopted this policy statement in **May 2020**.

It will be reviewed annually, no later than **May 2021**.

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## **1.1 Introduction**

Portland Spencer Academy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after and previously looked after children. The school and the governing body endorses Nottingham City Council policy and welcomes looked after children who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Nottingham City; and previously looked after children both from Nottingham City and other local authorities.

This policy includes the requirements set out in section 52 of the Children Act 2004 for looked after children and in sections 4 and 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 for previously looked after children. This policy also includes the requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities and schools to promote the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children in the following documents: *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities* (February 2018) and *Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities* (February 2018).

## **1.2 Definitions.**

### **A looked after child is:**

a child who is looked after by a local authority is a reference to a child who is—

(a) in their care; or

(b) provided with accommodation by the authority in the exercise of any functions

“accommodation” means accommodation which is provided for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

(Children Act 1989)

### **A previously looked after child is:**

(a) a child who was looked after by the local authority or another local authority in England or Wales but ceased to be so looked after as a result of—

(i) a 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,

(ii) a special guardianship order, or

(iii) an adoption order within the meaning given by section 72(1) of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or

(b)

a child who appears to the local authority—

(i) to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and

(ii) to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

(Child and Social Work Act 2017)

### **1.3 Principles.**

Portland Spencer Academy's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of looked after children and previously looked after children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education set within an inclusive context which makes reasonable adjustments to ensure a personalised curriculum to maximise educational, social, and emotional outcomes;
- Listening to the looked after child or previously looked after child;
- Working closely with parents, carers, voluntary and statutory agencies;
- Promoting attendance through a programme of early intervention, priority action, reducing exclusions and promoting stability within a positive learning environment;
- Identifying need, including social and emotional as well as learning needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities;
- Targeting support, including accessing resources from other agencies as well as provision from school resources;
- Having high expectations.

### **Rationale.**

Many children and young people who are in care or have previously been in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, looked after and previously looked after children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Barriers to their progress include a high level of disruption and change in school placements and a lack of motivation or involvement in extra curricular activities.

Portland Spencer Academy believes that the educational experience of **all** children should be positive and powerful, and aims to provide a learning environment in which every looked after and previously looked after child can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that looked after and previously looked after children are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being, in line with Every Child Matters (2003).

Looked after and previously looked after children have a right to be treated respectfully, staff being mindful that they are role models in challenging situations.

## **1.4 Admission arrangements.**

We recognise that due to care arrangements looked after and previously looked after children may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognises that looked after children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise looked after and previously looked after children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE School Admissions Code (December 2014). In- year admissions are not necessarily guaranteed, but the school will do what it can to accommodate in-year entry.

## **1.5 Support and resources**

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for looked after and previously looked after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy, and that the school's behaviour policy is sufficiently flexible to respond to the potentially challenging behaviours of looked after and previously looked after children.

## **2.0 Designated Teacher.**

The Designated Teacher is **Laura Wright**.

## **2.1 Role and Responsibilities.**

The duties of the Designated Teacher will include:

- Ensuring that looked after and previously looked after children are welcomed into the school, necessary meetings are held and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs are identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed;
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the looked after and previously looked after children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required;
- Monitoring and tracking the progress of looked after and previously looked after children in school and intervening if there is evidence of individual underachievement;
- Monitoring/tracking of looked after children and previously looked after's emotional well-being and development.
- Holding a supervisory brief for all children looked after and previously looked after and acting as advocate for the looked after and previously looked after children in school;
- Liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for child protection as well as pastoral staff to ensure they are

aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage looked after and previously looked after children may face;

- Establishing and maintaining regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies;
- Developing and implementing the child's PEP in partnership with others where necessary and ensuring PEP review meetings are held regularly for looked after children and information passed to all those concerned, including the local authority;
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding looked after and previously looked after children;
- Providing a termly report to the governing body via the named governor in school;
- Submitting Pupil Premium Plus, education progress grant and additional funding request applications to the relevant local authorities as required within local authority deadlines;
- Ensuring that Pupil Premium Plus and other funding is spent, as specified, for the benefit of the looked after and previously looked after child, seeking the child's views to support this;
- Acting a source of advice and guidance to all staff within the school working with looked after and previously looked after children.

## **2.2 Record keeping and information sharing.**

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of looked after and previously looked after children in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff according to GDPR regulations. Additional guidance on this can be obtained from school's data protection officer (DPO) as necessary.

A personal education plan (PEP) will be initiated within **10** school days of the looked after child starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the looked after child every 3 months initially and then every 6 months. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly. The PEP should create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, as a matter of importance, include the child's own understanding of how they are being supported.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the looked after child is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

At transition, the Designated Teacher should contact the Designated Teacher of the receiving school.

### **2.3 Exclusions.**

Portland Spencer Academy recognises that looked after and previously looked after children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions and will take all possible steps to avoid both fixed term and permanent exclusions.

Where a looked after or previously looked after child is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the child to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the pastoral support plan.

All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and perhaps alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

The Designated Teacher will contact the relevant Virtual School at the earliest opportunity when a looked after child is identified at risk of exclusion either fixed term or permanent.

### **2.4 Staff development and training.**

The Designated Teacher will ensure that they are kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of looked after and previously looked after children including those events run by the Virtual School such as training on the designated teachers' role and responsibilities regarding promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and designated teacher network meetings.

The Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked after and previously looked after children learn and achieve.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with looked after and previously looked after children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. This includes awareness of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separated (attachment) and how this may affect the child's learning and behaviour.

Teachers with responsibility for special educational needs and disability provision and for children who are able, gifted and talented will be informed of those looked after and previously looked after children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

The designated teacher will deliver whole school training on looked after and previously looked after children where required. This forms part of the school's CPD package. In addition to this, staff who work in close connection with looked after and previously looked after children will attend additional child-specific training.

## **2.5 Liaison with home and other agencies.**

### **Home.**

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents and carers to enable looked after and previously looked after children to achieve their potential. The Designated Teacher should make themselves known to the parents and carers of looked after and previously looked after children.

Consultation evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

### **Agencies.**

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the looked after and previously looked after including social care teams; community educational psychologist; health services, CAMHS; Youth Justice Service, Autism Team, Learning Support Team, and Sensory Team.

The school has an agreed process for communicating with other agencies e.g. any communication with an outside organisation about a looked after child must go through the designated teacher in the first instance.

## **3.0 Governance.**

The school's named looked after and previously looked after governor is **David Kirkham**. His role is to monitor the duties of the designated teacher who reports to the local governing board and provides updates. The looked after and previously looked after children governor must support and challenge where necessary.