



Moordown St. John's CE Primary School

Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

“A Christian community where commitment to educational excellence changes lives.”

The Board of Directors of Moordown St. Johns CE Primary School ratified this policy on 24th September 2026

Review Date: April 2029

A copy of this policy in an alternative format, such as large print or different language, may be provided on request from the school office

Moordown St John's CE Primary School

Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children

INTRODUCTION

In line with BCP Children's Services, Moordown St John's Primary School supports the council's commitment towards securing a first class education service and promotes inclusion and equality for our looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Moordown St John's is a Christian school and aims to ensure that quality learning opportunities and education are provided for all.

1. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

It also takes into account [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

2. DEFINITIONS

Looked-after children are registered pupils that are:

- in the care of the local authority, or
- provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

Previously looked-after children – are registered pupils who 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

They appear to the governing board to have:

- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

PEP – this is the **personal educational plan**, as part of the child's care plan, drawn up in conjunction with the child's social worker, education worker (in some local authorities) and **designated teacher**. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen, to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Designated teacher - the **designated teacher** has lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school.

Virtual School Head (VSH) – a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils 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 previously looked-after children.

3. OBJECTIVES

We recognise that looked-after children nationally experience educational underachievement and that looked-after children deserve the same life chances as any other child. We use the pupil premium plus funding to ensure that each looked-after child makes the best possible progress they can.

We therefore set out the following objectives:

- Looked-after children will have priority for all educational opportunities including one to one tuition and group intervention where appropriate.
- We will aim to ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all looked-after children.
- We will have high expectations for all looked-after children.
- We will aim to provide continuity and stability for each looked-after child.
- Looked-after children will be provided with early intervention wherever possible.

We will ensure that

- we identify and make parents, carers and staff aware of a suitable member of staff to be the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- we participate in discussion, decision making and the planning of the personal education plan.
- we work in partnership with the social worker to ensure the progress of the looked-after child is monitored and the personal education plan is reviewed regularly.
- our designated teacher works to promote and sustain the educational achievement and welfare of the looked-after children in our school, and supports other members of staff to do so.
- all staff are aware of the impact on the emotional and social development of a looked-after child.
- the progress and attainment of all looked-after children will be carefully monitored by the designated teacher.

- we provide opportunities for looked-after children to take part in extracurricular activities where they show an interest.
- we give all looked-after children the chance to develop emotional literacy and access to additional support in these areas if necessary.
- we work jointly with other local authority agencies to ensure consistency, and work very closely with parents, foster carers and social workers in order to secure a successful school experience.
- we share and transfer information and data speedily to relevant agencies and individuals.
- we continue to develop our knowledge and attend relevant training related to the needs of the looked-after children in our care.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Name of the designated teacher responsible for looked-after children:

Mrs Miranda O’Gara Inclusion Leader and SENCo

Name of the school director with responsibility for looked-after children:

Mrs Michelle Widdicombe

You can contact them via the school office on msjoffice@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk

ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

4.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
 - Working with VSHs
 - Promoting a whole-school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Contribute to the development and review of whole-school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children

- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their parents, carers and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

4.2 Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure looked-after 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 looked-after 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 pupils
- Ensure that:
 - A looked-after 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
 - 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
 - The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

4.3 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and how to support them
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents, carers and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging them to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas such as attendance, behaviour and emotional well-being.
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure other staff also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

4.4 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 looked-after and previously looked-after 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, carers and guardians of previously looked-after 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 looked-after 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 looked-after 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 looked-after 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 previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each looked-after 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 looked-after 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 previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents, carers or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- To ensure the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher.

- To ensure the school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of looked-after children.
- To ensure there are arrangements in place to keep themselves informed about provision for, and attainment of, looked-after children and previously looked-after children on the school's roll.
- To ensure the school makes all appropriate provision for looked-after children and previously looked-after children.

5. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour (Relationship Shaping)
- Child protection and safeguarding
- SEND
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Suspension and permanent exclusions

6. POLICY RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy has been carefully considered and ratified by the Board of Directors at its meeting on 24th September 2026.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the next review taking place during April 2029. However, this will be brought forward should changes in protocol be recommended by the Department for Education, the Local Authority or the Diocese.

Signed:



Date: 24.09.26

Chair, Board of Directors