

# BADER PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Designated Teacher Policy for children in our care and previously looked after children

Reviewed: June 2020

Next Review: June 2021

## Rationale

We are a Rights Respecting School and this policy is underpinned by our continued commitment to UNICEF and the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. This policy links directly to the following articles. Children's rights and responsibilities:

Article 3: The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers;

Article 9: Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child;

Article 12: When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account;

Article 19: Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them;

Article 20: Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language;

Article 21: Children who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, should have their situation reviewed regularly.

Bader Primary School believes that in partnership with Stockton Borough Council as Corporate parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of children in our care.

Designated Teacher for Children in our Care: Melanie Weir  
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Governor with responsibility for Children in our Care: Brenda Oxlee

Children in our Care are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. The majority of children who come into care are there because of abuse or neglect, domestic violence or parents' drug related issues.

As a school we recognise that outcomes nationally for Children in our Care are well below national averages and we understand and support the government agenda to address this disparity. As corporate parents in Stockton-on-Tees we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education;
- Listening to children;
- Providing stability and continuity;
- Taking corporate responsibility;

- Promoting inclusion;
- Raising standards;
- Intervening early;
- Promoting early years experiences and post 16 progression;
- Celebrating success.

The governing body of Bader Primary School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities.

**Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:**

- Children who are accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20);
- Children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38);
- Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46);
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

**The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989. They may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act. They may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school or they may be fostered with family members. All these groups are said to be 'Children in our Care-CIOC. They may be looked after by Stockton-on-Tees local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Stockton-on-Tees.**

### **Aims**

- Ensure a suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for Children in our Care and previously looked after;
- Ensure that school policies and procedures are inclusive of Children in our Care;
- Ensure that all Children in our Care have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and this includes the provision of a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability;
- Ensure that Children in our Care take as full a part as possible in all school activities including extra-curricular activities;
- Ensure that carers, social workers and the Virtual School Head teacher for Children in our Care are kept fully informed of the progress and attainment, attendance and transition arrangements of the child;
- Ensure that appropriate intervention strategies are put in place when there is concern about a child's lack of progress;

- Ensure that Children in our Care are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision;
- Ensure all staff are appropriately trained to support the needs of Children in our Care;
- Ensure staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

### **Admissions**

The governing body endorses Stockton Borough Council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against looked after children. Due to care placement changes, Children in our Care may enter school mid-term. It is vital that as a school we ensure that they are given a positive welcome in order that they feel secure. If necessary, we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupils settle.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The governing body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Children in our Care and will be kept up to date via reports from the designated teacher/governor.

### **Transition**

The school will ensure that all stakeholders are provided with the appropriate information, advice and guidance to support the smooth and effective transition of Children in our Care and young people at all key stages.

### **Role of the Designated Teacher**

The following is based on the responsibilities listed in the [DfE's statutory guidance](#). Although the designated teacher always has lead responsibility, at Bader Primary School, it is decided collectively with the Senior Leadership Team how individual functions, including pastoral and administrative tasks, can be appropriately delegated.

### **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 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 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

### **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 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 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 funding

- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after 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 previously looked-after 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers 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, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children 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
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after 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 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 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 or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

### **Definitions**

**Children in our Care** are registered pupils 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 looked-after children** are registered pupils 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
  - 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

**Personal education plan (PEP)** is part of a looked-after 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 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.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Attendance and Exclusions
- SEN
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Inclusion

### **Monitoring arrangements**

**In line with the statutory guidance (The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Children in our Care- Statutory guidance for governing bodies.) The designated teacher will provide the governing body, as a minimum, with an annual report on the progress of Children in our Care and young people.**

This policy will be reviewed annually by **David Hodgson, Headteacher**. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.