



storyybrook

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy





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1. Aims

At Storyybrook, we recognise that looked-after and previously looked-after children are among the most vulnerable pupils in our school community. Many have experienced trauma, disruption, and adverse childhood experiences which can significantly impact their emotional wellbeing, relationships and access to learning.

In line with our trauma-informed, relational approach, we are committed to ensuring that all looked-after and previously looked-after children are supported to feel safe, valued and able to thrive.

We aim to:

- promote the educational achievement, wellbeing and emotional development of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- provide a safe, predictable and nurturing environment where pupils can rebuild trust in education
- ensure all staff understand the impact of trauma, attachment and disrupted experiences on learning and behaviour
- prioritise strong, consistent relationships as the foundation for engagement and progress
- work in close partnership with carers, families, the Virtual School Head (VSH), social workers and other professionals
- ensure that provision is personalised, inclusive and responsive to individual need
- maintain high expectations for all pupils while providing the support required for them to succeed
- ensure that safeguarding remains central to all decisions and actions

Storyybrook ensures that:

- a suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- the Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, 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

This policy forms part of Storyybrook's wider safeguarding and inclusion framework and should be read alongside our Safeguarding, Behaviour and SEND policies.

The views, experiences and voice of looked-after and previously looked-after children are actively sought and used to inform support, provision and policy development.





2. 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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children 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 Body 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.





4. Context and Storyybrook approach

Storyybrook is a specialist SEMH provision where many pupils have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), disrupted education and involvement with social care. As a result, looked-after and previously looked-after children may present with heightened emotional needs, attachment difficulties and challenges in regulating behaviour.

At Storyybrook, behaviour is understood as communication, and all responses are grounded in a trauma-informed approach. We use a consistent model of regulate, relate, repair and reflect to support pupils in developing emotional regulation, rebuilding relationships and engaging positively with learning.

Looked-after and previously looked-after children are supported through:

- consistent, trusted adult relationships
- predictable routines and clear boundaries
- personalised support plans aligned with EHCPs and PEPs
- high levels of pastoral and emotional support
- a strong focus on belonging, safety and trust

All staff recognise that these pupils may require additional flexibility, understanding and targeted intervention to achieve positive outcomes.

5. Storyybrook Designated Teacher

Our Designated Teacher is Mrs Rachel Burbridge (Headteacher)

You can contact them on 01344 981249/ Head.Storyybrook@storyy.group

Our Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

6. Role of the Designated Teacher

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

They will 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 SEND 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





The Designated Teacher will ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are of a high quality, outcome-focused and regularly reviewed. This includes monitoring the impact of agreed strategies, ensuring targets are ambitious yet achievable, and that provision is consistently implemented and adapted in response to the pupil's progress, needs and voice.

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.

The Designated Teacher will also ensure that:

- the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are considered within the school's trauma-informed and relational approach
- staff understand how trauma, attachment and adverse childhood experiences may impact behaviour, engagement and learning
- all safeguarding concerns relating to these pupils are identified early and responded to promptly, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- close working relationships are maintained with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), recognising the increased vulnerability of these pupils, and ensuring that their attendance, behaviour and wellbeing are closely monitored with early intervention where concerns arise

The Designated Teacher's Role in Transition:

- Storyybrook recognises that transitions can be particularly challenging for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The school works proactively with carers, social workers, the Virtual School Head (VSH) and receiving settings to ensure that transitions into, within and beyond the school are carefully planned, well-supported and minimise disruption to education and wellbeing.
- This includes sharing key information, preparing pupils emotionally, and ensuring continuity of support to promote stability, security and ongoing progress.

7. Attendance

Storyybrook recognises that looked-after and previously looked-after children may face additional barriers to attendance, including emotional distress, anxiety, placement instability and previous negative experiences of education.

The school takes a proactive, supportive approach to attendance, working closely with carers, social workers and external agencies to:

- identify and address barriers early
- provide appropriate emotional and pastoral support
- maintain high expectations while responding flexibly to individual needs





- ensure pupils are able to access education consistently and successfully

Attendance for looked-after and previously looked-after children is closely monitored, and any concerns are addressed as part of a wider safeguarding and support plan.

8. Safeguarding

Looked-after and previously looked-after children are at increased risk of harm and require a high level of safeguarding awareness and vigilance.

At Storybrook, safeguarding is the golden thread that underpins all aspects of practice. All staff understand that behaviour, attendance patterns and emotional presentation may indicate underlying safeguarding concerns.

The school will:

- ensure all staff are aware of the increased vulnerabilities of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- respond promptly to any safeguarding concerns in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), social workers and external agencies
- ensure that all decisions are made in the best interests of the child
- maintain a child-centred approach, recognising the importance of listening to and advocating for the pupil

Safeguarding team

Priority contacts in order:

- **Priority 1:**
Mrs Rachel Burbridge - Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Priority 2:**
Mrs Rachel Tetchner - Deputy Headteacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Safeguarding Governor - Mrs Debbie Smith

All safeguarding concerns are recorded and acted upon in line with statutory guidance.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective, reflects current statutory guidance, and continues to meet the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after





children. The impact of the policy will be monitored through analysis of attendance, progress, behaviour and pupil voice.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy
- Supporting pupils with Medical Needs

