

Roxbourne Primary School



Designated teacher for Looked After and previously Looked After Children

Author	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Link Governor (if applicable)	Safeguard Link Governor
Review Cycle	Annual
Approved By	The Full Governing Body
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Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

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1. Rationale

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. At Roxbourne Primary school we are committed to ensure that Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children receive a transformational education with rich opportunities which will allow them to fulfil

their potential. Roxbourne Primary School believes that, in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children. 'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

2. Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To ensure that Looked After children have the same access to Enrichment opportunities as their peers.
- To support the emotional well-being and mental health of Looked After children.
- To support our Looked After children by providing access to every opportunity to achieve their potential, enjoy learning and participate as fully as possible in all school activities.
- To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for Looked After as for all children.
- To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After Children are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment. The Virtual School for Looked After Children and Care Leavers to assess, review and support Personalised Education Plans (PEPs) and Education Pathway Plans to raise attainment, provide advice, guidance and support for intervention

3. Who are Looked After Children?

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 under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20).

- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38).
- Children who are the subjects 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. All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours. LAC reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for LAC until they are 16 years old.

The legislation in this policy refers to:

- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Section 20A of the 2008 Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils.) Regulations 2009

Our school's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Listening to children
- Targeted support
- Having high expectations and raising aspiration
- Early intervention and priority action
- Promoting health and mental well-being

- Minimising exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

The Designated Teacher should:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- ensure a smooth and welcome induction for new students, for the carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning (where feasible);
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;

- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA
- the DSL engages with Harrow Virtual School for Looked After Children and Care Leavers to support the child

All staff members will:

- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children

The Governing Body of Roxbourne Primary School will:

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;

- support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons)
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

5. Staff Development and Training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked After Children. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked After Children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs. Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Looked After Children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

6. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The PEP and its importance:

All looked-after children must have a care plan. This is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority responsible for the child. It should identify intended outcomes and objectives for the child and provide the framework to work with the child and carers in relation to their emotional and behavioural development, identity, relationships and self-care skills. The care plan must also include a health plan and a PEP.

The PEP is a record of the child's education and training. It should describe what needs to happen for a looked-after child to help them fulfil their potential and reflect, but not duplicate, any existing plans such as EHC plans. The PEP is a vital document because it

provides a 'collective memory' about the child's education. It is an integral part of a looked-after child's wider care plan. The care plan and PEP may have been drawn up before the child becomes looked-after and is placed. However, if a child becomes looked-after in an emergency, the PEP must be initiated within 10 working days of the start of the first placement. An initial version must be available for the 20 working-day review of the care plan. The PEP should be initiated by the social worker as part of the care plan but developed and reviewed in partnership with relevant professionals.

Where the child is on the roll of a school, this will include the designated teacher, although class and subject teachers would have considerable input. If the child has SEN, the SENCO or head teacher would also contribute. The PEP, in addition to being part of the overall care plan, is part of a looked-after child's official school record. If a child moves school, the PEP should be forwarded as a matter of urgency, along with other school records, to the new school when known, and to the main contact (usually the child's social worker) in the local authority which looks after the child. The PEP should help everyone gain the clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision necessary to ensure academic progress and meet the child's educational needs, describing how that will be provided.

The PEP Timeline:

1. Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school)
2. Date is set for the completion of a PEP.
3. The school engages with Harrow Virtual School to support the child.
4. A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data. A PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
5. A date is set for the next PEP meeting and is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.
6. PEP sent by Social worker to the LAC team

7. Exclusions

Roxbourne Primary School recognises that Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC 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 young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

8. Confidentiality

Information on Looked After Children will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know' basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

9. Home-School Liaison

Roxbourne Primary School recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their potential. Open evenings as well as PEP review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this working partnership.