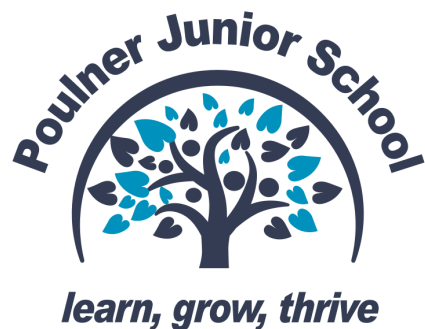




Poulner Junior School

The Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Written by: Jo Randall (Headteacher)
Grace Smalley (Pastoral Leader)

Date: October 2024

Version	Reviewed	Ratified	Description of main changes	Signature
1.0	23/01/2020	25/05/21	New Policy	JW
1.1	15.5.22		No changes made	JW
1.2	April 2024	May 2024	No Changes made	JR

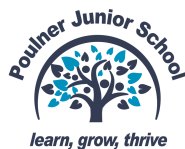
Next Review Date: Spring Term 2 (2025)

Reviewed & Ratified by: FGB

Review Frequency: annually (DfE Guidance)

Description of policy: School DT and LAC policy

Other documents referred to: Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils - DfES July 2002, Equality and Human Rights Code of Practice 2007, SEND Inclusion Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy



Poulner Junior School

Designated Teacher and Education of Looked After Children Policy

Rationale

At Poulner Junior School, we believe that, in partnership with Hampshire County Council as Corporate Parents, we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children. We believe that all Looked After Children, and those previously in care, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Poulner Junior School pupils. As a community we aim to be champions for Looked After Children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development.

To do this we commit to:

- Supporting them to raise their aspirations
- Giving them a sense of the control they have over their own lives
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

Aims

To create a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their responsibility in supporting the role of Corporate Parent.

- 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 support our looked after, and post looked after, children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, by asking the question, '**Would this be good enough for my child?**'

Definitions:

Looked-after children are registered students 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 students 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 students 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.

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 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

Our Designated Teacher

Our designated teacher is Mrs Grace Smalley

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.

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 students matter and are prioritised.

- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things that can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve.
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students
- 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.
- 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, carers 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 students.
- 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.
- Ensure that if / when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Report to the Governing body annually on the performance of the looked after children who are on the roll of the school.

Supporting both Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure that looked-after, and previously looked-after, children, along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.
- 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.
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previously looked-after children.
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas such as attendance and behaviour.
- 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, 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 systems are in place to identify and prioritise when looked-after and previously looked-after children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health difficulties 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.

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 etc.
- 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.

All governors and staff will:

- support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after, and previously looked-after children.