

**Heart of the Forest  
Community Special School**

**Designated Teacher for Looked After  
Children Policy**

Heart of the Forest



<b>Approved by:</b>	HoF Governing Body	<b>Date:</b>	May 2023
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	Sept 2021	<b>Next review date:</b>	May 2024
<b>Website:</b>	Yes	<b>Type:</b>	Statutory

## Designated teacher for Looked after Children (Children in Care) Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1	Sept 2020	Reformatted
1	Sept 2021	None
2	May 2023	Amendments; responsibility for LAC Additions; policy legal framework and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with safeguarding /child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, the Pupil Premium Policy and strategy statement.

**NB: It is Gloucestershire LA policy to refer to this group of pupils as Children in Care. National policy is to refer to them as Looked After Children.**

### Introduction

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools were required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 to appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children in care who are on the school roll. The statutory guidance includes pupils up to the age of 18. We have pupils who are 19 and we consider that our responsibilities therefore continue up until this age. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 enhanced the support we currently provide for children who are 'previously looked after'. (adopted children and permanently placed children, including Special Guardianship orders) As a consequence, the governing body now has to designate a teacher to promote the educational achievement of these pupils too. Currently the responsibility for both groups of pupils lies with our Assistant Headteacher.

All these pupils are in receipt of Pupil Premium Plus. (Please refer to the Pupil Premium Policy)

At the Heart of the Forest Community Special School we are committed to supporting the pupils in our school to ensure that they have the best possible educational opportunities. We believe that children in care or those previously looked after, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and should achieve at a similar level to all children.

We recognise the need to have quality systems in place to minimise the affect that being in care, or previously been in care, can have on their educational achievements.

### **Policy (Legal Framework)**

#### **Looked after children (LAC)**

The term 'looked after' has a specific, legal meaning, based on the Children Act 1989: a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if they fall into one of the following:

- is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, [Children Act 1989, Section 20 and 21]
- is subject to a care order [Children Act 1989, Part IV]
- is subject to a placement order

#### **Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)**

PLAC children are those who:

- are no longer LAC by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or
- were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Every local authority is required to appoint an officer to make sure that their duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC is properly discharged; this officer is called the Virtual School Head (VSH). The duties of the VSH are defined in the

DfE statutory guidance “Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children” – February 2018.

## **Procedures**

### **Admissions**

Heart of the Forest School welcomes all LAC. All LAC and PLAC should have the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The school recognises that LAC and PLAC are an ‘excepted group’ and will be prioritised in our oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006). Due to care placement changes, LAC children may enter mid-term. It is vital that these students are given a positive welcome. If necessary, they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help the student settle.

### **The PEP (Personal Education Plan)**

A PEP will be initiated within 20 school days of the LAC starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary (at least termly and within 6 months of the previous PEP). The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns, ensure appropriate support is in place and set SMART targets. The child should be involved in their PEP by attending the meeting and/or sharing their views or in another way (e.g. gathered by the DT before the meeting). We will have robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are reflected in the PEP and addressed through the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) framework as soon as possible.

### **Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)**

PPP for LAC will be delegated to schools by the relevant virtual school. We will allocate the Pupil Premium Plus funding (PPP) to support appropriate provision for individual LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and the child’s PEP. We will work in partnership with the child’s Virtual School to ensure that LAC receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve in all aspects of school life. For PLAC, the PPP funding will go directly to the school’s budget if the child is listed as PLAC on the January census. The use of this funding will be identified in consultation with the young person and their parents. To be read in conjunction with existing Pupil Premium Policy.

## **The role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that there is a designated teacher for CIC and pupils who have been previously looked after who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training that it is regularly updated.
- Receive a report from the designated teacher annually that provides them with information on levels of progress of children in care, patterns of attendance and exclusions, any planning issues arising from pupils' personal education plans, any workload and cost implications arising as a result of the number of children on roll, how their teaching and learning needs are reflected in school improvement plans, any training implications and impact of school policies on their education. Information in this report must be collected in a way that preserves anonymity and respects the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Consider any issues arising from the report in order to support the designated teacher and maximise the impact of the role.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy annually alongside the annual report.

## **The role of the designated teacher**

The designated teacher will:

- Take the lead in promoting a culture of high expectations for how children in care, and those that have been previously looked after, learn.
- Be an advocate for children in care and for those that are previously looked after..
- Ensure smooth transitions from and to other settings.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share information on a need to know basis.
- Be a source of advice for staff about alternative teaching and learning strategies.
- Have a lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan.

- Ensure that there is a clear process in place for attendance at meetings, monitoring and updating the PEP and liaising with carers, adoptive parents and special guardians.
- Be the central point of initial contact within the school who can manage the process of how the school engages with the other agencies involved.
- Provide the annual report to governors and ensure that any issues are addressed through the school improvement process.
- Undertake appropriate training and disseminate to other staff and governors.
- Work with virtual school heads or their equivalents in local authorities.
- Ensure that PP+ funding is targeted to drive achievement and well-being

### **The role and responsibility of all staff**

All staff will:

- As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievements of children in care and those that are previously looked after.
- Be familiar with the guidance on children in care, and those previously looked after, and respond appropriately to requests for information on Personal Education Plans and other documentation needed for meetings.
- Liaise with the designated teacher where a child in care, or child who is previously looked after, is experiencing difficulties.

### **Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

This Policy undergoes a detailed review by staff and Governors as appropriate. The Assistant Headteacher is the designated teacher and monitors the effectiveness of the Policy. This policy is available on request at the school office and will be displayed on the school website.

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