



LOCATION: SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 38

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN) POLICY

Date policy first adopted: March 2012

Date reviewed: March 2025

Reviewed By: Jacqueline Rudden

Date ratified by Governing Body: n/a

Date of next review: Spring 2027

Also, see the appendices at the end of this policy regarding:

MEDWAY COUNCIL

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Introduction

1.0 At Abbey Court, we strive to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where everyone is valued and respected equally. We aim to provide an inclusive education where children develop independent learning skills and are taught according to need whatever their age, gender, background, beliefs or abilities. National legislation regarding disabilities, special education needs, equality, race relations and related aspects underpin this policy, which also reflects the Medway policy for the Education of Children Looked After.

1.1 Abbey Court aims to maximise the opportunity for every pupil to succeed. Children and young people who are looked after by local authorities are one of the groups most likely to underachieve nationally. Abbey Court is committed to supporting looked after pupils to achieve their full potential alongside other pupils, to enjoy their learning and to experience success in school.

1.2 This policy has links to other Abbey Court policies and documents:

- *Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.*
- *Home School Agreement.*
- *Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.*
- *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.*
- *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.*

1.3 Legal Framework: this policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2024) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children 2023'

1.4 Definitions:

'Looked After Children (LAC)' are defined as children who:

- Are provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours under the Children Act 1989, sections 20 and 21.
- Are subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989, part 4.
- Are subject to a placement order.

'Previously LAC (PLAC)' are defined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as children who:

- Are no longer looked after by an LA because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

2.0 Aims

The aims of this policy include:

- To work together with the Local Authority, Virtual Schools, Children and Young People with Disabilities Team, Foster Carers, Medical and Nursing Services, Therapy Services and all other stakeholders in an effective partnership to ensure that children's needs are met.
- To contribute to the provision of a successful and integrated service for children who are looked after by the Local Authority (LA) and other LAs.
- To ensure that children who are looked after (or previously looked after) have equality of opportunity in school, enabling them to access, experience and benefit from education in the normal way alongside peers and respecting their right of anonymity if this is their wish.
- To comply with the LA guidelines on the education and care of Looked After Children and young people.

3.0 Objectives

To ensure these aims are achieved, Abbey Court School has:

- Identified a Designated Teacher to co-ordinate the education of Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), to ensure that staff in the school are aware of any Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), know each carer and understand individual circumstances including parental rights and access.
- Liaised effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings.

- Worked in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), receive their full entitlements, including provision and access to school news and information.
- Ensured that all records are kept and maintained appropriately.
- Provided information to the Governing Body and LA about the progress and outcomes of Looked After children (and Previously Looked After Children), on the school roll.
- Secured training for the Designated Teacher, or others appropriate, to ensure that the school can meet the needs of Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children).

4.0 Roles and responsibilities:

4.1 The Governing Body (GB): Governors will fulfil their responsibilities to Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), through:

- Ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- Nominating a governor to oversee the well-being of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring that the GB takes up suitable training opportunities.
- Monitoring appropriate training for school staff.

The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for the management and organisation of the school and is the first point of contact for any matters relating to the pupils.

4.2 The Headteacher will fulfil responsibility to Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), through ensuring that this policy is approved by the GB and that it is reviewed on a regular basis:

- Ensuring that any practical guidelines needed to ensure the well-being of any particular child are identified.
- Monitoring and informing of the legal position with regard to parental access, provision of school reports.
- Promoting the role of key workers and carers.
- Ensuring sensitivity relating to the child's past experiences.
- Managing any other relevant information.

The Headteacher reports to the GB on:

- The admission of any Looked After Children.
- The number of LAC and PLAC in the school.
- Progress and achievement of looked after children, in comparison to other pupils.
- Significant issues, events or incidents involving looked after children.
- The level of attendance in comparison to other pupils.
- The level of fixed term and permanent exclusion, compared to other pupil groups.

4.3 The Designated Teachers (the Deputy Headteachers) will fulfil their responsibility to the Looked After Child through:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Liaising with the Headteacher, foster carers and other agency workers as requested to ensure a coherent approach across services.
- Being aware of the care plan for each child.
- Contributing to the development and maintenance of a personal education plan in partnership with other relevant professionals. Ensure that the focus of Personal Education Plan review meetings is on securing appropriate progress and that the review clearly identifies targets and

the support necessary to achieve them. The targets for these are drafted and agreed at the multi-professional pupil progress meeting.

- Knowing who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Knowing who are the primary carers.
- Ensuring that information is provided for those who are entitled to receive it.
- Working sensitively with information to ensure that Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), are not exposed to inappropriate or intrusive attention from staff or pupils.
- Establishing good relationships and lines of communication with key workers and foster carers.
- Contributing to or attending meetings as requested.
- Maintaining an overview of the experiences and education of the child including tracking academic progress and target support appropriately (termly through the pupil progress meeting).
- Participating in appropriate training to develop the skills and knowledge needed to support the Looked After Child (and Previously Looked After Child).
- Ensure that each looked after child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, and will take account of the child's own wishes. *Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. Typically, at Abbey Court School, these are the Key Stage Leaders. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher and Designated Safeguard Lead.*
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Encourage Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children).
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that a high proportion of looked after children (and Previously Looked After Children), have experienced bullying, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Work in partnership with the Medway Virtual Headteacher (and Virtual Headteachers of other authorities, where pertinent).
- Ensure that Personal Education Plans, attendance and attainment data and other requested information are returned to the Virtual Headteacher as requested.
- Be aware of the most recent developments in the education and support of Looked After Children and seek any necessary support and guidance from the local authority's Virtual Headteacher (usually through attendance at the Medway Designated Teacher meetings).

4.4 All Staff at Abbey Court School will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's (and Previously Looked After Children's) confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.

- Work to enable Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), and other pupils to achieve stability and success within the school.
- Promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), and all other pupils.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children (and of Previously Looked After Children).
- Be aware that a high proportion of Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children), have experienced bullying, so work to prevent bullying in line with the school's policy.

5.0 Equal Opportunities

All pupils at Abbey Court School are given opportunities to access all areas of the curriculum in line with Abbey Court School's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

6.0 Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed in the light of:

- Changes in the statutory requirements for looked after children.
- OFSTED requirements.
- Monitoring of its effectiveness in light of its implementation.
- Changes in Abbey Court School's organisation.
- Changes to Health and Safety requirements/ legislation.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Contacts

Appendix 2: PEP procedure

Appendix 3: Medway Policy for the Education of Looked After Children

Appendix 1: Contact details

Abbey Court School, Designated LAC Leads: Jacqueline Rudden / Zoe Silvester

Abbey Court School, LAC Governor: Chloe Knight

Medway Council: Sarah Hall, Virtual Headteacher, Medway Virtual School

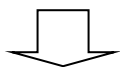
Appendix 2: PEP procedure, Abbey Court School

It is the responsibility of the Designated Teacher (Deputy Headteacher) to ensure the following:

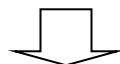
1. Termly PEP is compiled by the KS Leader and Class Teacher.
2. The pupil premium page (targets and related funding requests) is completed by the KS Leader/Deputy.
3. The PEP meeting is chaired by the KS Leader, unless it coincides with the LAC or the Annual Review.
4. LAC meetings are attended by the Deputy Headteacher (KS Leader, if unavailable).
5. Pupil progress returns to pertinent virtual Headteachers are completed by the Deputy Headteachers on request.
6. The termly PEP is distributed to all attendees and the Virtual Headteacher: this is usually done automatically/electronically as part of the e-PEP process.

**Please note that the specific arrangements for completing the e-PEP paperwork is individual to each Local Authority – please refer to the relevant Local Authority’s e-PEP guidance and procedures for further details.*

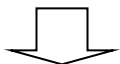
PEP is drafted by the Key Stage Leader working with the Class Teacher (the Deputy Headteacher is consulted when compiling the pupil premium section: funding requests).



Targets are drawn up at multi-professional pupil progress meeting.



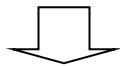
The new targets are inserted into the PEP, along with the previous term’s evaluated targets (if pertinent).



PEP meeting is arranged (where possible, at a Parents’ Evening, LAC Review or Annual Review).



At the PEP meeting, the PEP is shared and any outstanding parts completed (e.g. including social worker input).



Following the PEP meeting, the PEP is circulated to all professionals present and the Virtual Headteacher (this is done automatically/electronically by the e-PEP). A copy is also put in the pupil’s Orange Pupil File.



At the end of the term, progress with the targets is evaluated. These targets are reviewed at the pupil progress meeting at the start of the next term and new targets are agreed. The evaluated targets are also inserted into the PEP.

Appendix 3 - Medway Council

Medway Council

Education Policy for Looked After Children (Incorporates policy for previously Looked After Children who have subsequently been adopted or subject to special guardianship).

As a Corporate Parent, supporting Looked After Children to succeed is a key priority for Medway Council. It is committed to working in partnership with carers, all education providers, governors, professionals, voluntary organisations, other local authorities and all stakeholders to secure success and provide a better future for Looked After Children.

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Early years provision, schools and post-16 educational facilities have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to succeed and thrive.

The Council will champion appropriate assessment of needs and prioritise timely interventions to secure the best possible outcomes for all Looked After Children. It will ensure that staff working with Looked after Children are appropriately trained and supported. A priority both for the Council's policy and for its practice will be to ensure that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy, to achieve, to make a positive contribution to society and to achieve economic well being.

Medway's Virtual Headteacher will provide strategic and specific educational support, and will challenge and guide Designated Teachers and school leaders. (S)he will work closely with Looked After Children themselves and with other professionals, stakeholders and carers to secure the best possible outcomes for all Looked After Children. In addition, the Virtual Headteacher will work in partnership with other local authority staff and organisations to monitor the outcomes for Looked After Children, to identify areas for development and to take appropriate steps to secure improvement.

Medway's Educational Psychology Service supports pre-schools and schools in prioritising, understanding and meeting the needs of their Looked After Children. The Educational Psychology Service provides relevant training and consultation support to school staff and other professionals/agencies, as well as working with individual Looked After Children, their carers and teachers. The Educational Psychology Service ensures schools have an effective understanding of the attachment needs of our young people and the implications of such needs for successful teaching and learning.

Young people who have been adopted or who are subject to special guardianship

The Council recognises that many young people who have been adopted or who are subject to special guardianship require additional support in order to succeed. For some of these young people, similar support to that required for Looked after Children may be necessary as most have been looked after themselves and have experienced disrupted parenting. The Council is committed to provide this by working with guardians, adoptive parents, education providers, governors, professionals, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders.

In addition, the Council will work with the Medway Adoption and Permanence Team, education providers and other local authorities to maintain appropriate confidentiality and to facilitate the secure transfer of all necessary information.

This policy takes account of:

- The Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (*Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors*).

[School] Governing Body

**Education Policy for Looked After Children
(Incorporates policy for previously Looked After Children who have
subsequently been adopted or subject to special guardianship)**

This policy was agreed and adopted at a Governors' Meeting held on *date*:

The policy will be formally reviewed on *date*.

[The Headteacher/the Designated Teacher/the Staff Development Officer (as appropriate for your own school)] will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Advice and support is available from Medway Council's Looked After Children Virtual Headteacher.

Policy Statement

[Our school's] approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children and Looked After Children who have subsequently been adopted or subject to special guardianship is based on the following principles:

- Understanding the particular needs of each looked after child.
- Prioritising education and progression.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Early intervention and priority action.
- Listening to children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

Implications

The Governing Body of *[our school]* is committed to recognising and taking account of the fact that individuals' personal circumstances can affect attitudes and performance and that this is particularly the case for young people who are or who have been in care. As for all pupils, *[our school]* is committed to helping every Looked After Child, and those who have subsequently been adopted or subject to special guardianship, to achieve the highest standards they can. This will include developing aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

We are committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- *[For Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools]* Ensure Looked After Children are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006. (These require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to LAC in their oversubscription criteria. Faith schools must give first priority to LAC of their faith ahead of other applicants, and are permitted to give priority to all LAC, regardless of faith. In addition, Grammar schools must give top priority to LACs who meet the academic requirements).
- Ensure a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for every Looked After Child, in line with Medway's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Identify a governor who is prepared to be trained as Designated Governor for Looked After Children.

Links to other policies and documents

This policy links with a number of other school policies and documents. It is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them. These policies and documents include:

- *Oversubscription criteria.*
- *The School Code of Conduct.*
- *Behaviour Policy.*
- *Discipline Policy.*
- *Home School Agreement.*
- *Anti-bullying Policy.*
- *Equal Opportunities Policy.*
- *Policy on Racial Harassment.*
- *Child Protection Policy.*
- *Special Educational Needs Policy.*
- *[Other policies or documents].*

The school will champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Monitoring Arrangements

The governing body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of Looked After Children, through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure that Looked After Children are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school. This will be achieved by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Looked After Children achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort. Ensure that the school has a suitably qualified Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support and challenge the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 3. Their end of year attainment, levels, grades, GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) for LAC pupils.
 5. The destinations of LAC pupils who leave the school.

6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

SCHOOL POLICY PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEADTEACHER

- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Ensure that appropriate and effective actions are taken to close any gaps in the attainment of Looked after Pupils and that their outcomes are in line with those of their peers.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children. OFSTED now select a number of Looked After Children, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that the adoptive parents or guardians of previously Looked After Children has ready access to an identified member of staff of similar standing as the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- Consider a nominated Governor Champion for Looked After Children.
- Appoint a suitably qualified Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children.
- Allocate resources (including Pupil Premium) to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen...[who] should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for LAC. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through our Virtual Headteacher and Social Care Team. Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on Looked After Children, monitoring how the School has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker

- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that the focus of Personal Education Plan review meetings is on securing appropriate progress and that the review clearly identifies targets and the support necessary to achieve them.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. *Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.*
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage Looked After Children to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Recognise that timely intervention is more effective than exclusion and set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that a high proportion of Looked After Children have experienced bullying so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Work in partnership with the Medway Virtual Headteacher and Virtual Headteachers of other authorities.
- Ensure that Personal Education Plans, attendance and attainment data and other requested information are returned to the Virtual Headteacher as requested.
- Be aware of the most recent developments in the education and support of Looked After Children and seek any necessary support and guidance from the local authority's Virtual Headteacher.

THE ROLE OF THE IDENTIFIED MEMBER OF STAFF FOR PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN ADOPTED OR WHO ARE SUBJECT TO SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP

If requested by parents or guardians, the identified member of staff will provide additional appropriate support to:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their parent/guardian.
- Work with parents/guardians and the Medway Adoption and Permanence Team to complete a Personal Education Plan.
- Review the Personal Education Plan at key transitions and when appropriate.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children and other pupils to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children and all other pupils.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children and of previously Looked After Pupils.
- Be aware that a high proportion of Looked After Children have experienced bullying so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

(Provided by Sarah Hall, Virtual Headteacher, Medway Virtual School, June 2020
– this is the most recently updated document available)