Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Date agreed by Governors	Summer 2023
Reviewed	Autumn 2026
Next Review	Autumn 2028

Linked Documents
Anti-Bullying Policy
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy

Legal Framework
The Children Act 1989
The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
The Adoption and Children Act 2002
The Equality Act 2020
The Children and Social Work Act 2017
The Children's Wellbeing and School's Act 2026

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles which inform this policy are:

- Article 2: Every child will be treated without discrimination, whatever their family background.
- Article 3: The best interest of the child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children
- Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.
- Article 28: Every child has the right to education. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights.
- Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and their environment.
- Article 31: Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

School's Purpose: To prepare pupils for lifelong success

School's Vision: At Godwin Junior School we:

- Value everyone
- Instil a love of learning
- Seek and encourage talent
- Inspire resilient learners
- Open minds to develop responsible global citizens
- Nurture confident, articulate individuals

Introduction

Nationally, Looked after Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are recognised as some of the most vulnerable learners. At Godwin Junior School we continually strive to support our vulnerable children. Most children enter care because of abuse or neglect and can often experience attachment issues, loss and trauma. These outcomes often influence learning and well-being. Nationally, it is recognised that Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children do considerably less well than their peers, resulting in poor exam success and often leading to limited further education, employment and training opportunities. This obviously impacts significantly on their life chances.

Godwin Junior School is committed to achieving high educational outcomes for Looked after Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), through providing access to a high-quality and rich curriculum, taking account of their additional needs.

"Under the Children Act 1989, a child is defined as 'a looked after child' by a Local Authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. This can happen under a number of arrangements." (**Children Act 1989)**

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20).
- Children who are the subject of a Care Order (section 31) or interim Care Order (section 38)
- Children who are subject to 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)

Previously LAC children refers to those children that are no longer in care through:

- Adoption
- Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)
- Child Arrangement Orders (CAO)

<u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>

Governing Board

The Governing Board of Godwin Junior School will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- Ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep Looked After Children safe
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Looked after Children, who is trained and has sufficient time to fulfil the role
- Ensure the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children in accordance with the Admissions Code of Practice 2014
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher, which should include:
    - The number of Looked After Children on roll
    - Confirmation that each has an up to date high quality Personal Education Plan
    - Information about their school attendance and exclusion rates in comparison to other pupils

    - Their progress and attainment data
    - Destinations for Looked After Children who leave the school
    - The use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus in accelerating progress

    All information collected and reported will be done anonymously for safeguarding reasons and to respect the anonymity and confidentiality of the child/ren concerned
- Ensure that the school's policies and practice give equal access to:
    - Admission to school
    - The curriculum and also to take examinations both academic and vocational
    - Support and participation in extra-curricular activities
- Review the effective implementation of the school's Looked after Children Policy on a biennial basis.

Head Teacher

As the school leader the Head Teacher will:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, where possible ensuring that there are Deputy Designated Teachers in case of staff absence.
- Be knowledgeable about the School's Admission Code in relation to school admissions
- Carefully consider any proposed exclusion, taking account of the vulnerability of a Looked After Child and the potential impact on their care arrangements and give due consideration to alternatives to exclusion wherever possible
- Provide opportunities for the continuous professional development of the Designated Teacher to enable them to fulfil their role
- Provide sufficient time to allow them to undertake the requirements of the role effectively
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and take effective action regarding the admission, attendance and progress of Looked After Children
- Ensure all staff receive relevant training opportunities and are aware of their responsibilities under this Policy and related guidance

Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher of Godwin Junior School will:

- Know all the details about each Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Child in relation to which Local Authority has care responsibilities, their legal status, care and contact arrangements, parental responsibility and the level of delegated authority given to carers
- Provide a welcome and smooth introduction to the school for the child and their carer(s)
- Ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead has details of the child's social worker and the name of the Virtual School Head in the Local Authority
- Have a lead responsibility in promoting and raising the educational achievement of every Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Child on the school roll
- Ensure their educational, personal, social and emotional needs are prioritised
- Take the lead responsibility for helping all school staff to understand the factors that can affect how Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Children learn and achieve along with the impact of attachment and trauma
- Have high expectations for the progress of Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Children

- Ensure every child has a high quality up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP) and regularly monitor the progress of learning objectives
- Maintain the overview of progress, attendance and provision including the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus, linking with the Virtual School (Email: NewhamVirtualSchool@newham.gov.uk) as necessary
- Ensure any Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are addressed in accordance with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice
- Be an advocate for Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children
- Attend any relevant training and ensure training and CPLD opportunities are regularly reviewed and records updated
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and individuals in relation to Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure all Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Children have a positive and considered integration or transition to or from our school
- Keep PEPs and other records up-to-date and reviewed regularly
- Where a Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties in school, will communicate effectively with parents, carers and other professionals to plan targeted, effective intervention and support
- Ensure the confidentiality of Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Children by sharing confidential/personal information on a need-to-know basis only
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure that liaison between foster carers, professionals and school is effective, including invitations to meetings and particularly school events i.e. school plays, Parent/Carer Conferences and celebration events.
- Actively encourage and promote home learning and extra-curricular activities
- Ensure speedy transfer of information when Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Children transfer to another educational placement
- Contribute to Looked After Children's statutory reviews when required
- Provide regular reports to the Governing Board regarding Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Child

Godwin Junior School staff

Ensuring Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children do well and are supported requires a whole school approach. As a school, we will:

- Have high expectations and aspirations for the educational achievements of Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure that any Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained within safeguarding requirements

- Be familiar with the guidance on Looked After Children Looked after Children or Previously Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support Personal Education Plans (PEP) and review meetings
- Ensure the Designated Teacher is informed when a Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties in class or within the school environment
- Only use exclusion as a last resort in line with the exclusion guidance, being mindful that exclusion may place the care placement under duress and may cause further disruption to care and education.

Staff Development

The Designated Teacher should be trained for the role and should ensure access to ongoing professional development opportunities for the role through various opportunities. As a school, we encourage staff to participate in training opportunities that will enable them to meet the needs of Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children effectively. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of the issues and barriers to learning for these children within the whole school environment.

Personal Education Plans

Looked After Children must have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP) that contributes to the overall care plan. These are usually completed termly. Each Local Authority has its own approach to PEPs which should be followed by the school.

Pupil Premium Plus

Looked After Children attract the Pupil Premium Plus grant (PPP) The purpose of the grant is to reduce the difference in educational outcomes between these children and their peers. As a school, we will carefully plan and regularly review the use and effectiveness of the PPP to ensure it is accelerating progress and meeting the needs of the Looked after Child as identified in their PEP.

Funding is linked to educational targets identified and agreed on a child's Personal Education Plan.

Pupil Premium Plus Funding is held by the LA Virtual School and disbursed to schools under certain conditions. The Virtual School Head (VSH) has the following duties relevant to PPP use in school:

- making sure that the money is spent effectively
- decisions about the use of the funding being clearly linked to the specific targets agreed during the Personal Education Planning meeting and recorded within the PEP documentation.
- discretion when deciding the amount of the PPP it provides to schools, because individual pupils' needs vary. The VSH will reserve the right to refuse to allocate funding if it considers the proposed use is not appropriately identified.
- having arrangements in place to engage with the Looked After Child's school about how the PPP is contributing to meeting the needs identified in the PEP

Use of Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) must be used to improve educational outcomes for children in care in the following areas:

- raising levels of achievement and progress (e.g. 1:1 tuition)

- supporting achievement in an area where a child is gifted or talented (e.g. specialist teacher)
- improving attendance (e.g. reward incentives, 1:1 specialist mentoring service)
- supporting emotional wellbeing (e.g. specialist counselling/therapeutic support)
- promoting inclusion by reducing internal and external exclusion (e.g. whole school training, support from specialised services)
- developing social skills (e.g. drama therapy)
- supporting a smooth transition into the next key stage or new place of learning (e.g. transition advisers/careers advisors)

Circumstances in which Pupil Premium Plus will not be provided:

- to double fund or replace funding which has already been allocated to the school to support the child, for example: - funding services that should be provided via an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), or SEND funding - funding other statutory work e.g. speech and language or occupational therapy, - Statutory assessment or other support from health, CAMHS or education psychology - for provisions put in place when the school's own funding covers the cost of interventions
- if the PEP and the PPP request form does not correlate or provide sufficient detail
- if the completed PEP is not submitted
- if it is a cost that is expected to be covered by foster carers through their allowances e.g. - clothing/uniform, travel to and from school, breakfast club, holidays and activities outside of term time
- private tuition arrangements (all tuition should be arranged by the school using Virtual School approved providers)
- to fund school trips and out of school leisure activities unless there is a clear link between the trip/activity and a PEP target. This is at the discretion of the Virtual School Head.
- IT hardware items such as laptops. Foster carers and children's homes must provide suitable IT equipment and access to the internet so that children can study at home.

The Designated Teacher (DT) for LAC should:

- play a key role in planning the use of the PPP for each child/young person and in reviewing the impact of any intervention
- ensure the PPP is jointly agreed by the school, social worker, carer, Virtual School Head and child/young person
- ensure the use of the funding is clearly linked to the specific targets agreed during the PEP meeting and recorded within the PPP section of the PEP
- ensure the request for PPP is submitted on the correct form for approval by the VSH
- ensure the impact of the PPP is monitored at the termly PEP review
- the use of PPP must meet the requirements as outlined in the Local Authority's Virtual School policies.