CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER POLICY

NAMED PERSON:	Matt Wardle

Last Review Date:	September 2026
Review Cycle:	1 Year
Next Review Date:	September 2027

Mr Andy Crossey **Chairman of Governing Body**
Signed: A.D. Crossey
Date: September 2026

INTRODUCTION

Who are our Children Looked After?

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 parent/carers
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- 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.

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 parent/carers 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 **'Children Looked After' -** CLA. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours. CLA will have a care manager who arranges their care plan. All schools have a designated officer for CLA.

The Governing Body of The Buckingham School is committed to providing quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Governing Body recognises that, nationally, there is educational underachievement of Children Looked After, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance, Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

The Children's Act 1989 places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential". The Improving Attainment Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of Local Authorities and schools to support looked after young people by setting out these principles:

1. Doing the things, they do for all young people but more so
2. Balancing high levels of support with real challenge
3. Skilfully linking each young person to a key person, they relate well to
4. Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships
5. Allow young people to have a voice
6. Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies
7. Making things happen and seeing things through
8. Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility
9. Actively extending the horizons of each young person
10. Planning for future transitions

The Guidance introduced two key measures:

- To ensure that a Designated Teacher is nominated in every school, for The Buckingham School this is Mr Matt Wardle, Lead Deputy Headteacher and Lead DSL
- To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all CLA

This Governing Body is committed to ensuring that the Designated Teacher and staff at The Buckingham School are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children – CLA - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Under-achievement in further and higher education.

Section 20 of the 2008 Act places the following duties on governing bodies:

- To designate a member of staff (the designated teacher) as having the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered pupils at the school;
- To ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training (section20(2);
- The governing body and the designated teacher must have regard to this guidance and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009 require that the designated person is:

- A qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school (regulation 3(2)); or
- A head teacher or acting head teacher of the school (regulation 3(3).

The Governing Body and all the staff at The Buckingham School are committed to ensuring that all CLA achieve, are challenged and enjoy school. In doing so we all have key roles and responsibilities:

The Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc.)
The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities Feb 2018

The designated teacher should be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

The designated teacher should work closely with the Virtual School to ensure that the PP+ funding is used to enhance the learning and enrichment opportunities of the young person. In addition, the School and Virtual School should explore any further support and training that benefits the young persons and the staff they work with.

Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:

- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put looked after children at a disadvantage;
- Make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support a looked after child's learning. Particular account should be taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what he or she can achieve;
- Promote a culture in which looked after children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- Promote a culture in which looked after children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked after;
- Make sure the school makes full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short- and medium-term progress of Children who are looked after and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there;
- Make sure that looked after children are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one to one tuition and that they have access to academic focused study support;
- Promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers. In particular, they should make sure that carers understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary. Further information on the role of the designated teacher and the PEP is set out in the guidelines mentioned at the beginning of this policy.
- Ensure confidentiality of individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student.
- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- Understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- Appreciate the central importance of the child looked after PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;
- For previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parent/carers in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parent/carers who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school

The designated person will report on:

- The number of CLA on roll and the confirmation that they have a PEP
- Ensure PEPS are followed in accordance to the statutory guidance
- Their attendance compared to other students
- Their attainment compared to other students
- The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
- The destinations of students who leave the school

Good practice for all staff:

The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how looked after children learn and achieve. **Everyone involved in helping looked after children achieve should:**

- Have high expectations of looked after children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- Understand how important it is to see looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- Appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- Appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential;
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, virtual school heads (or equivalent) in local authorities and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises CLA according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for CLA. The appointment of a designated teacher in accordance with the Regulations is a core function of the governing body. The guidance referred to earlier sets out what the school governing body collectively will need to do in order to fulfil its duty under section 20 of the 2008 Act and the Regulations.

The Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc.) (England) Statutory Guidance Feb 2018 (the regulations) require that the person designated is:

- A qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school (regulation 3(2)) or
- A Headteacher or acting Headteacher of the school (regulation 3(3)) or
- A person who has had responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked after pupils for at least six months immediately before the Regulations came into force and who is training to be a teacher and likely to qualify before 1 September 2012 (regulation 3(4)).
- If the governing body applies regulation 3(4), it should be of the view that there is a reasonable prospect of fulfilling the conditions laid down in the Regulations by September 2012. Governing bodies will no longer be able to use it to make an appointment
- Liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of CLA are met
- Nominate a Governor with responsibility for CLA who links with the Designated Teacher Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher and at least one annual report
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give CLA equal access in respect of:
  - Admission to school
  - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational – Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities – Work experience and careers guidance.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of CLA

Good practice suggests that the Local Authority will:

- Lead on the drive to improve educational and social care standards for CLA
- Ensure that the education of this group is as good as that provided for every other student
- Ensure that CLA receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every CLA has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care
- Make sure that every CLA has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for CLA and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate

Guidelines set out in "The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after Children" and "Improving the attainment of looked after young people in Secondary Schools" also form part of this policy and will be adhered to.

NB: It is common practice for out of county children in care to receive daily support through a Welfare Call for their attendance and PEP administration.