

CROSSLEY STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

October 2026

Designated Teacher: Gemma Stanton

Designated Governor: Richard Meadmore

Definition

A looked-after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions. Looked-after children may live with foster carers, in residential care, with relatives or, in some circumstances, with their parents.

A previously looked-after child is a child who was looked after by a local authority in England or Wales, or was in state care outside England and Wales, and ceased to be looked after because of adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order. The definition also includes children adopted from state care outside England and Wales where the relevant criteria are met.

This policy should be read alongside the Department for Education statutory guidance on promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and the statutory guidance on the role of the designated teacher. It also sits within the school's wider safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, SEND and equality arrangements.

Rationale

Many children who are looked after or who have previously been looked after have experienced loss, separation, trauma, abuse, neglect or disruption. These experiences may affect learning, relationships, attendance, emotional wellbeing and behaviour. However, being looked after or previously looked after should never be treated as a reason for low expectations.

Crossley Street Primary School is committed to ensuring that every looked-after and previously looked-after child is supported to achieve their potential, develop positive relationships, feel safe and included, and have high aspirations for their future.

School Commitment

Crossley Street Primary School recognises that looked-after and previously looked-after children may have specific educational, social and emotional needs. We will promote their educational achievement and welfare through high expectations, effective planning and close partnership working.

We recognise that children may experience practical barriers, including changes of placement, transport difficulties, disrupted attendance, changes of school, uncertainty about parental responsibility, difficulty obtaining equipment or uniform, and concerns about stigma or belonging. We will respond sensitively and proportionately, always considering the best interests of the child.

Crossley Street Primary School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of looked-after and previously looked-after children in the following ways:

- Having high expectations and aspirations for every child and ensuring equal access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.
- Ensuring that the child's strengths, needs, interests, aspirations and voice inform educational planning.
- Using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) as a live document for looked-after children, with clear, ambitious and measurable educational targets and agreed actions.
- Tracking attainment, progress, attendance, participation, behaviour, wellbeing and barriers to learning, and acting promptly when concerns arise.

- Working closely with the Virtual School Head (VSH), social worker, carers, parents where appropriate, and other relevant professionals.
- Supporting stability, continuity and successful transitions, including when a child enters care, changes placement, joins or leaves the school, or moves between phases.
- Promoting strong attendance and addressing barriers in line with current statutory attendance guidance.
- Promoting positive behaviour and inclusion, with suspension and permanent exclusion used only in accordance with current statutory guidance and with appropriate consideration of the child's individual circumstances.
- Providing access to enrichment, extra-curricular activities, educational visits and wider school opportunities.
- Handling personal information sensitively and sharing it on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.
- Challenging stigma, prejudice and bullying and ensuring that looked-after and previously looked-after children feel valued and included.
- Ensuring staff understand the potential impact of trauma, attachment, loss and disrupted relationships on learning and behaviour, while avoiding assumptions about any individual child.
- Ensuring appropriate support is considered through the school's pupil premium strategy and, for eligible previously looked-after children, pupil premium funding.
- Ensuring that children know which trusted adults they can speak to and have meaningful opportunities to express their views about support and decisions affecting them.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Ensure the school has an appropriately qualified and trained Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children and an appropriate deputy or alternative arrangement when the Designated Teacher is unavailable.
- Ensure effective procedures identify, monitor and respond to admission, attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and safeguarding needs.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate information, training and guidance.
- Ensure effective partnership working with the VSH, social workers, carers, parents where appropriate and other professionals.
- Ensure concerns about educational progress, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding or placement-related disruption are acted upon promptly.
- Ensure compliance with current statutory guidance, including safeguarding, attendance, admissions and suspension/permanent exclusion requirements.

Governing Body

- Ensure the governing body appoints a Designated Teacher who is appropriately qualified to support the educational achievement of looked-after children and ensures the designated member of staff responsible for previously looked-after children receives appropriate training.
- Ensure appropriate oversight of educational progress, attendance, wellbeing and outcomes for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure school policies and procedures support their needs.
- Provide appropriate challenge and support to school leaders regarding progress, attendance, inclusion and safeguarding.
- Ensure information presented to governors does not identify individual children unless necessary and lawful.

Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher has a key leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children. The role requires sufficient authority, appropriate training and effective access to senior leaders, the VSH and other professionals.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcoming and supportive induction for children who join the school, including children who arrive during the academic year or following a change in care placement.
- Ensure each looked-after child has an up-to-date PEP and that the school contributes effectively to its development and review. Where a child enters care in an emergency, the PEP process will be initiated in line with statutory guidance and local Virtual School procedures.
- Ensure the PEP identifies strengths, needs, educational barriers, aspirations, SMART targets, provision, responsibilities and timescales, and includes the child's views wherever possible.
- Track academic progress and attainment and secure timely support.
- Coordinate support across the school, including liaison with the SENDCo, pastoral staff, attendance lead, safeguarding team and class teachers.
- Ensure eligible previously looked-after children are identified sensitively and that parents or carers understand how to provide evidence of status where needed for pupil premium eligibility.
- Work with school leaders and the VSH to ensure pupil premium plus for looked-after children is used effectively and linked to identified educational needs and the PEP.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure information is shared appropriately and lawfully.
- Promote the child's voice, participation and sense of belonging, including identifying a trusted adult in school where appropriate.
- Attend or contribute to care planning and review meetings where appropriate and ensure education is represented effectively.
- Work proactively with the VSH, social worker, carers, parents where appropriate and other agencies to remove barriers to learning.
- Support successful transitions between classes, schools, key stages and post-primary destinations, ensuring relevant records and information are transferred promptly.
- Monitor attendance and work with the school's attendance team and relevant professionals to address barriers early.
- Monitor behaviour and suspension information and ensure appropriate support is considered where there is a risk of suspension or permanent exclusion.

- Ensure relevant staff understand individual needs and that support is not based on assumptions or stereotypes.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life, including trips, clubs, leadership opportunities and enrichment.

Staff

All staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational, personal and social achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Treat each child as an individual and avoid assumptions based on care status or previous experiences.
- Maintain confidentiality and handle information sensitively, sharing information only where there is a legitimate need and in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing procedures.
- Understand that trauma, loss, disrupted attachments and changes in circumstances may affect learning, relationships, emotional regulation and behaviour, while recognising that children respond differently.
- Respond promptly to requests from the Designated Teacher and contribute relevant information to PEPs and other planning.
- Support positive relationships, belonging and self-esteem and actively challenge bullying, discrimination and stigma.
- Follow the school's safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, SEND and inclusion policies and raise concerns promptly.
- Support successful transitions and maintain continuity of learning and relationships wherever possible.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the importance of effective multi-agency working. We will work closely with the Virtual School Head, social workers, carers, parents where appropriate, health professionals, SEND services, educational psychology, CAMHS where involved, and other relevant agencies. Information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements and with the child's best interests at the centre.

The school will participate appropriately in PEP meetings, care planning and review meetings and will ensure that educational information is current, accurate and focused on the child's needs and aspirations.

Admission arrangements

Looked-after and previously looked-after children must be treated in accordance with the current School Admissions Code and the school's published admission arrangements. Admission arrangements must give the required priority to looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Where a looked-after child joins the school outside normal admission points, the school will provide a positive and supportive welcome and work promptly with the responsible local authority, VSH, social worker and carer to secure relevant records, including the PEP, and to support a smooth transition.

The school will follow current statutory requirements regarding admission registers and information-sharing when pupils join or leave the school outside normal transition points.

Attendance, behaviour and suspension

The school will promote high attendance and respond to barriers to attendance in line with the Department for Education's current statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance*. Attendance will be monitored for individuals and groups, with early support where attendance begins to deteriorate.

Where behaviour concerns arise, the school will consider the child's individual circumstances, safeguarding needs, SEND and other relevant factors and seek appropriate support. Any suspension or permanent exclusion will be managed in accordance with current statutory guidance and the school's behaviour policy.

Safeguarding and wellbeing

Looked-after and previously looked-after children are entitled to the same safeguarding protection as all pupils, with additional sensitivity to circumstances that may have contributed to their care status. Staff will follow *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and the school's safeguarding procedures. Concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation, missing education or other risks will be reported promptly.

The school will promote emotional wellbeing and provide access to trusted adults and appropriate pastoral support. Where a child's needs indicate additional or specialist support is required, the school will work with relevant services.

Pupil Premium and educational support

For looked-after children, pupil premium plus is managed by the Virtual School Head and should be used to support educational achievement through evidence-informed provision linked to identified needs. The school will work with the VSH and relevant professionals to agree how support will be used.

Eligible previously looked-after children attract the post-looked-after element of pupil premium. Parents and carers will be encouraged to inform the school of eligibility so that the child can be appropriately supported and the school can account for the needs of this cohort within its pupil premium strategy.

Funding will not be treated as an entitlement to a fixed intervention for an individual child. Provision will be based on identified need, evidence of effectiveness, the child's voice and the school's wider pupil premium strategy.

Transition

- Plan transitions early, particularly where a child is moving placement, school or phase.
- Share relevant educational information promptly and securely with the receiving setting and professionals.
- Where appropriate, arrange additional visits, familiarisation, meetings or pastoral support.
- Ensure the child is involved in transition planning at a level appropriate to their age and understanding.
- Monitor adjustment following transition and review support where necessary.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The school will respect the confidentiality of looked-after and previously looked-after children. Information about care status, placement, family circumstances and personal history will be shared only where there is a legitimate educational, safeguarding or legal reason to do so. Staff will follow the school's safeguarding and information-sharing procedures and current statutory guidance.

Monitoring and review

The Designated Teacher will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy and report to the Headteacher and governing body as appropriate. The school will review progress, attendance, inclusion, wellbeing and support for looked-after and previously looked-after children and use this information to identify improvements.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local Virtual School procedures.

Key statutory guidance and related documents

- Department for Education, Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children: statutory guidance (updated February 2018).
- Department for Education, The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: statutory guidance (updated February 2018).
- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education 2026.
- Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance (updated July 2026).
- Department for Education, School Admissions Code 2021 and subsequent relevant legislation and guidance.
- Department for Education, Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (effective July 2026).
- Department for Education, Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2026 to 2027.
- Children Act 1989; Children and Young Persons Act 2008; Children and Social Work Act 2017; relevant regulations and subsequent legislation.