

Mapledown School



Working and Learning Together

Policy for the Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Name of School	Mapledown School
This policy was amended on	16 th November 2020
This policy was agreed by Governors and adopted on	22 nd March 2021
The policy was reviewed in	September 2021 September 2022 September 2023 September 2024 September 2025
The policy is to be reviewed annually in	September 2026

Date policy last reviewed: 1st September 2024

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Looked after Children (LAC) and previously-LAC are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation as national data suggests that children in public care have significantly underachieved compared to their peers.

The Governing Body of Mapledown School is committed to promote the inclusion, wellbeing and achievement of all LAC (Looked After Children) and will ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that the Designated Teacher is able to carry out his /her responsibilities effectively.

Named Designated Teacher : **Caroline Garvey** Deputy Head

Mapledown school endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding

Content:

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Personal education plan (PEP)
5. Working with agencies and the Virtual School Head (VSH)
6. Training
7. Safeguarding
8. Pupil mental health
9. Exclusions
10. Pupils with SEND
11. Information sharing
12. Monitoring and review

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989, 2002, 2004
- 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 (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 - Updated 2024/25 revisions

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER:

The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DCSF Statutory Guidance 2009) states that the Designated Teacher should be 'someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, (who) should be an advocate for the young people in public care, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.'

Our Designated Teacher will :

- Be a Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The designated teacher will review the progress attendance and wellbeing of looked after pupils.
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their 'carer.'
- Ensure that every LAC has an identified key member of staff (usually the class teacher).
- Ensure that staff are informed on a need to know basis of all relevant information about the child.
- Co-ordinate any support that is necessary within the school.
- Encourage LAC to join in extra- curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Set up urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.

- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the child changes school, to the new school.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of all LAC in the school.
- Ensure that all LAC are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teachers requests for information.
- Work to enable all LAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self- esteem of all LAC, maintain confidentiality and ensure that no LAC is stigmatised in any way.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his / her responsibilities.
- Support everyone with responsibility for LAC in the school in ensuring that the needs of these children are recognised and met.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for the education of LAC.
- Nominate a Governor to take special interest in this area of the school work.

Named Nominated Governor: **Ajith Das Menon**

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOMINATED GOVERNOR

The nominated Governor will liaise with the Designated Teacher and report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of looked after children on the school roll.
- Their attendance as a discreet group, compared to other students.
- Their end of key stage and predicted scores as a discreet group compared to other students.
- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- The destinations of students who leave the school.

The information for this report will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the students concerned.

The nominated Governor will also ensure that the schools other policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:

- Admission to school – LAC are in the highest category for admission
- The National Curriculum and public examinations.
- Additional educational support where this is needed.
- In conjunction with the child's social worker and the local authority Head teacher for looked after children, ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed within **20 working days** of the child joining the school.
- In conjunction with the social worker for looked after children, ensure that the personal education plan is regularly reviewed each term.
- Extra-curricular activities
- Work experience and careers guidance where appropriate.

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEPs)

PEPs are essential tools for supporting the educational progress of LAC. Each LAC must have a PEP, which is a document outlining their educational needs, goals, and the strategies to support their learning. The PEP should be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to reflect changing circumstances or needs.

Our Designated Teacher must work together with the Virtual School to ensure that PEPs are created in conjunction with the child's social worker, foster carers, and the child themselves, to enhance ownership and engagement in the educational process. Our Designated Teacher is responsible for overseeing the implementation of PEPs and ensuring all staff are aware of their contents.

WORKING WITH AGENCIES AND THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Effective collaboration between Mapledown school and external agencies, including social services, mental health professionals, and educational psychologists, is critical to providing holistic support for LAC. It is essential that all parties share information promptly and efficiently, ensuring that everyone involved in the child's care and education is informed and aligned in their efforts.

The role of multi-agency working cannot be overstated; it encourages the sharing of best practices, resources, and knowledge to support the needs of LAC effectively. Mapledown must foster an environment where such partnerships are established and nurtured.

Collaboration with The Virtual School is paramount in ensuring that the educational needs of Looked After Children are effectively met. Virtual Schools play a pivotal role in coordinating support for LAC across different educational settings. Each local authority operates a Virtual School to promote the educational achievements of LAC and to facilitate access to high-quality educational experiences.

Mapledown works closely with Barnet's Virtual School to benefit from professional guidance and resources tailored specifically for LAC. This collaboration includes sharing information about the child's PEP, progress, and any issues that arise, allowing for a coordinated approach to support. The Virtual School can provide valuable insights and additional resources to assist with improving the educational outcomes for LAC.

The DT will ensure people premium plus funding is used effectively for individual outcomes

TRAINING

The Headteacher / Designated Teacher /CPD Leader will ensure that staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy and other relevant policies as required.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELL-BEING

"Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024" reiterates the essential responsibility of schools to safeguard all children, with particular consideration for LAC. Schools must have robust safeguarding policies in place, ensuring that all personnel are aware of how to identify signs of abuse or neglect.

LAC in a special school setting may express distress through changes in regulation, behaviour or physical symptoms rather than verbal disclosure. Staff will observe, record and share early signs of anxiety or trauma.

A proactive approach to safeguarding includes creating a supportive school culture where LAC feel valued, heard, and understood. Developing positive relationships between students and teachers can significantly enhance their confidence and emotional well-being, which, in turn, can lead to improved academic outcomes.

ONLINE SAFETY

The school recognises that children in care particularly those with communication or social understanding difficulties may be disproportionately vulnerable to online harm exploitation or misinformation. Staff will provide targeted teaching and supervision around online safety, digital resilience and safe social interaction where necessary.

The school will ensure the following are in place:

Regular reviews of Internet filtering and monitoring systems
Education tells you to pupils communication levels open brackets visuals social stories comma supported more resources closed brackets collaboration with carers on managing home or online use where applicable

ATTENDANCE

All absences for a LAC will be closely monitored. Any persistent or unexplained absences will trigger an immediate safeguarding review and will be monitored by the DT who is the attendance Lead.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To ensure that the policy is implemented effectively, Mapledown monitors the progress and welfare of LAC. This involves regular review meetings, data collection on educational outcomes, attendance, and behaviour, and feedback from LAC, foster carers, and external agencies.

Continual evaluation of the support provided to LAC will facilitate adjustments and improvements, ensuring that the needs of these children are being met effectively. Mapledown is transparent in reporting this data to governing bodies and external agencies, demonstrating a commitment to accountability and improvement.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner following statutory guidance. Full stop feedback from pupils, carers and key staff will inform updates ensuring that the voices of looked after children are central to the decisions about their educational well-being.