The Park Federation Academy Trust
Montem Academy

Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Policy 2026 - 2027

Approval

Signed by Principal	
Signed by Chair	
Date of approval	September 2026
Date of review	September 2027

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Key Contacts

Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
Bethany O'Brien
01753 528050

Governor for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
Viv Gibbons

Virtual School
Slough Children First

Virtual School Head
Cherie Sears
cherie.sears@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
07710 153662

Section 1: Introduction

Montem Academy is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This academy recognises that, nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children, and Previously Looked After Children, are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. Montem Academy has a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of children who are looked after, and previously looked after, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, (February 2018)'.

Related Guidance and Legislation

This guidance is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It is issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. This means that it must be followed unless there are exceptional circumstances that justify departing from it. The guidance sets the framework through which local authorities discharge their statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children. That includes those children placed out of authority. The Children and Families Act 2014 amended section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked-after children is properly discharged.

The guidance also sets the framework through which local authorities discharge their statutory duty under 23ZZA of the Children Act 1989 (added by section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. Local authorities are required to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote their educational achievement is properly discharged.

Who are Looked After Children?

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 parents (section 20)
- children who are subjects to a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)

- children who are subjects of 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).

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 parents 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 a residential school. All these groups are said to be Looked After Children – LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in care of another authority but living in ours

It is important to note that throughout this document the terms Looked After Children – LAC and Children Looked After – CLA are used interchangeably. Our school has been advised by the Virtual Head that children who are looked after prefer to be referred to as Children Looked after. Therefore, we endeavour to use this term when talking about this group.

Children Looked After may, or may not, have some or all of the following difficulties/barriers:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/cognitive development
- experience, or be involved in child on child abuse e.g be bullied or bully others, including cyber bullying
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues
- poor attachment to others
- have a need to be very private
- be at risk of other wider safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation or child sexual exploitation
- be at risk of grooming for radicalisation and extremism

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. Montem Academy is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- a designated teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After
- personal education plans (PEPs) for all Children Looked After
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect children who are looked after
- effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group
- for children previously looked after, the school will liaise with the virtual head who

will provide suitable advice and information in order to promote their educational achievement. The school will undertake any activity they consider appropriate where that activity will promote the educational achievement of children who are previously looked after.

Section 2: Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The school follows the 'Guidance on The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' which states that:

Effective Designated Teachers should:

- be a central point of initial contact within the school to make sure that the school plays its role in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
- have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll
- work with the Virtual School Head to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- 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:
    - have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
    - 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 looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, 12 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; and
    - for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.
- have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:
    - they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
    - there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;

- there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
- particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
- thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
- when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and
- there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings).

- promote a culture in which looked-after and previously 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;
  - 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;
  - are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
  - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
  - can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
- be a source of advice for teachers about:
  - differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and
  - the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.
- work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:
  - promote good home-school links;
  - support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
  - ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
  - ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and
  - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked after children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary; and
- work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Prepare reports and attend PEP review meetings and Looked After Child Review meetings each term.

When supporting previously looked-after children, designated teachers should be aware of the following:

- the Virtual School Head must provide information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of these children - this may be general information, including training opportunities, or information and advice on individual children at the request of their parents or designated teacher.
- The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, including any requests to the Virtual School Head for advice on meeting their individual needs.

Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities of all staff

Staff will:

- ensures that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPS and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs , as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of children who are looked after and previously looked after
- positively promote the self-esteem of children looked after and previously looked after.

Section 4: Role and Responsibility of the Academy Council

The school's academy council will:

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children. ;
- be aware of whether the school has children who are looked after or previously looked after and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After;
- liaise with the Principal to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her responsibilities in relation to Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After;
- support the Principal, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of these pupils are met;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports an provides feedback to the Academy Council
- review the effective implementation of this policy, annually.

The following questions taken from the DfE Guidance *The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children* (February 2018) and aims to help governors support the role of the Designated Teacher.

The governing body, head teacher and school leadership team will want to consider the following in supporting the designated teacher role:

- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and act as a champion for them?
- Does the designated teacher have training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments[5], to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including a good knowledge of SEN?
- How does the designated teacher role contribute to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve?
- What resource implications might there be in supporting the designated teacher to carry out their role?
- What expertise can designated teachers call on within and outside the school such as SENCOs, health and mental health support?
- What monitoring arrangements might be appropriate to ensure that the role of the designated teacher is providing appropriate support for looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school roll?

Section 5: Confidentiality

- information on children who are looked after and who have been previously looked after will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know basis'
- the designated teacher will discuss what information is shared with school staff at the PEP meeting
- once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Section 6: Training

The Principal and the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. The Designated Teacher will attend network meetings and any relevant trained arranged by the Virtual School Head in order to remain up to date with knowledge, skills and application of practice.

Section 7: Completion of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- The child's social worker informs the school of a child becoming looked after, or informs the school of a child who is looked after who is due to join the school.
- A date is set for the completion of the PEP and the next Looked After Child Review Meeting (LAC Review).
- The Designated Teacher is set up with the electronic PEP system and is instructed how to access it by the child's social worker or the child's Virtual School.
- The PEP paperwork is completed prior to the PEP and is a collaboration of work from the child's social worker, the Designated Teacher (and/or other appropriate staff who work with the child), carer and child, if appropriate.
- The PEP shares the child's care status, child's wishes and feelings around home life and school life, indications on attendance and academic attainment and progress, how pupil premium plus funds are being spent to support the child's progress, any details on SEND provision, any details on support for emotional health and wellbeing, reports of any exclusions and additions of any aspirations and successes.
- The child may attend some, all or none of the PEP. This will be dependent on the child's age, developmental and emotional ability to manage the meeting.
- The use of the pupil premium plus funding is approved or challenged by the Virtual School. If successful the school may use the funding as intended.
- At the end of the PEP, a date is set for the next PEP meeting where progress is reviewed again.
- The PEP is sent by the child's social worker to the LAC Team.
- The PEP is taken to the child's statutory review (LAC Review) and discussed within a wider context of the child's life.
- The LAC Review is chaired by an independent reviewing officer (IRO) and is attended by the social worker, the designated teacher, the carers, fostering agency, advocate, any other relevant professional and parents (if appropriate).

More detailed information on the PEP can be found in The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, February 2018, pg 15-19.

This policy links with the following policies:

- Child Protection Policy Safeguarding and Procedures
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- SEND Policy