Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people Policy

Vision

At Stockport Academy we believe that all looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people should have every opportunity to access excellent educational provision and achieve their true potential. As a school community we aim to be champions for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people to enable their attainment to be in line with that of the general population so that they personally experience positive outcomes in every aspect of their lives, now and in the future as an adult. We foster a culture of collaboration at Stockport Academy, which flourishes as a result of our moral purpose of bringing out the 'best in everyone'.

Aims

At Stockport Academy we aim to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
- Minimise the gap between the educational attainments of our looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people and the general population;
- Ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to appropriate support;
- Fulfil our role to promote and support the education of our looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- Provide a Designated Teacher and Designated Operational Lead for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people who will take an active role in promoting each young person's attainment and ensuring that their wider needs are met. Our Designated Operational Lead will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues; and
- Promote personalised learning in a culture where every child matters.

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring that improved educational opportunities for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people are provided by ensuring that the relevant personnel with responsibility for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and carry out their duties.

To achieve these aims we will ensure that:

- We celebrate the achievements of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- All our staff have high expectations of every pupil, encouraging achievement and ambition;
- We provide a special, trusted adult in the school who is able to take time to listen to each looked-after child and previously looked-after child and young person;
- Our staff are aware that being or becoming 'in Care' or have been 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration is given;
- All our teachers are made aware of the needs of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people and actively promote their best interests;

- All adults in the school are sensitive to the looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young peoples' wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status;
- Our teachers help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis;
- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people are listened to and have access to support and counselling in the school if required;
- Teachers are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem. Teachers will also be made aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers;
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established in accordance with the school's policy on looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- Systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- The Designated Teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between the school, carers and external agencies, and that high educational expectations are maintained;
- We support the engagement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people in out of school hours learning;
- Our staff work in partnership with parents, carers and agencies;
- We support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance; and
- For looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people, there is clarity in relation to who is and who is not allowed to collect the child from the school.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on and should be read alongside the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989;
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- The Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009;
- The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children: Statutory Guidance (DfE, February 2018);
- Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE statutory guidance);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- School Admissions Code.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- A looked-after child (LAC) is a child who is in the care of a local authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989.
- A previously looked-after child (PLAC) is a child who was previously in state care and ceased to be looked after because they became subject to an adoption order, special guardianship order, or child arrangements order.

Responsibilities

Our Designated Teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school does everything possible to maximise educational stability for the pupil;
- Robustly tracking the educational progress and attendance of all looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people on the school roll;
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations amongst the whole school community regarding looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people's achievements and attainment;
- Preparing an Annual Report for the Local Governing Body and provide additional information as required;
- Ensuring that looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people have equitable access to school resources and initiatives;
- Ensuring that every effort is made to enable looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people to access a wide range of extra-curricular activities;
- Making sure the pupil has a voice in setting their learning targets and reviewing their progress;
- Being a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils; and
- Making sure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people are prioritised in tuition/ revision arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.

Our Designated Operational Lead for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people is responsible for:

- Maintaining detailed individual records on all looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- Having the lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the pupil's personal education plan (PEP) within the school;
- In conjunction with the social worker, ensuring that the PEP is in place within 10 days of starting at our school and that it is circulated within 20 days of the PEP meeting;
- Ensuring that the PEP is updated and available for the Statutory Looked-after Children Review;
- Helping looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people make a smooth transition to their new school or college, including ensuring that there are effective arrangements in place for the speedy transfer of information;
- Ensuring that there is an agreed process in place for how the school works with other agencies; and
- Ensuring that school policies, e.g. Home School Agreements, are communicated to social workers and carers.

Our Local Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that:

- The Designated Teacher and Designated Operational Lead undertake appropriate training, including time away from timetabled commitments, 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 and young people;
- The Designated Teacher has appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership and Local Governing Body in order to help ensure that school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people and that they act as a champion for them;
- The Designated Teacher has appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to other staff members who will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- The Designated Teacher and Designated Operational Lead liaise with SENCO with regards to looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people's SEN needs;
- The Designated Teacher and Designated Operational Lead work with Virtual School and equivalents in other Local Authorities with regards to extra support for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- Appropriate monitoring arrangements are in place to evidence that the Designated Teacher is providing appropriate support for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- School policies are effective in reflecting the needs of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people;
- They receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher which enables them to make overall judgements about the Designated Teacher's responsibilities in the context of wider school planning in relation to:
    - Levels of progress for each young person, (on roll during the last 12 months) in relation to all children at the school (educational, social and emotional progress);
    - Patterns of attendance and exclusions;
    - Process or planning issues in relation to Personal Education Plans;
    - Gifted and Talented pupils and how their needs are being met;
    - Equitable access to school resources;
    - Access to extra-curricular activities;
    - How looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people's needs are reflected in school development plans and how they are being supported through interventions and other resources;
    - Training provided for the Designated Teacher and Designated Operational Lead;
    - The impact of school policies on looked-after children and previously looked-after children;
    - Any workload issues arising from these responsibilities.
- Giving careful consideration to the Designated Teacher's report and acting upon any issues it raises so as to support the Designated Teacher and maximising the impact of the role.
- We recognise the strategic role of the Virtual School Head in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children, providing advice and information in relation to previously looked-after children, and supporting improved outcomes for children with a social worker.

The Virtual School link teacher is responsible for:

- Working in partnership with the Virtual School;
- Contributing to regular monitoring meetings with the Virtual School;
- Seeking support from the Virtual School when required;
- Notifying the Virtual School of any attendance issues, exclusions or changes in the child's circumstances; and
- Providing the Virtual School with data as required e.g., teachers assessments, targets, exam results, attendance rates, etc.

The Designated Teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people is Kate Appleby who is a qualified teacher and holds a leadership position as Vice Principal.

The Designated Operational Lead for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people is Rob Taylor who is also the Safeguarding Lead in the school.

The Designated school Governor for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people is Peter Mulholland.

The Virtual School link teacher is Debbie Marshall

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

In respect of PEPs we will:

- In conjunction with the social worker, ensure that all looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people have a high quality PEP in place within 20 days of commencing their studies at our school;
- Ensure that PEPs are effective and include SMART and appropriate educational objectives and targets. This will be integral to the pupil's Care Plan held by their Social Worker, and form part of any other school plan e.g. Statement, Transition Plan, and Pastoral Support Programme;
- Implement the educational recommendations in the PEP action plan, ensuring that all relevant staff are clear about their responsibilities and tasks;
- Manage and review the PEP within expected timescales. In conjunction with the social worker, we will hold and chair a PEP meeting and subsequent PEP Reviews. The PEP is to be reviewed at least 3 times each year in line with STAT guidance (February 2018) and more frequently updated if required, e.g. following change of care placement or if Action Plan needs modifying; and
- Circulate the PEP and documentation from PEP Reviews to relevant people within 20 working days.

Additional or Special Educational Needs

In respect of additional or Special Educational Needs we will:

- Quickly identify additional needs and make appropriate provision within school resources;
- Ensure equal access to additional interventions, e.g. 1-2-1 Tuition, etc;
- Ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people are prioritised for referrals e.g. to the school's Educational Psychologist, LSS teacher, etc;
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people who are underachieving and intervene at an early stage to address this; and
- Contact the Virtual School in the event that concerns emerge.

Admissions and Transitions

In respect of admissions and transitions for children and previously looked-after children and young people we will:

- Ensure that all applications for new admissions or transfers are processed through Stockport's Admission Team;
- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset;
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience and
- Prioritise looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people within the school's admissions procedures and aim to admit pupils in less than 20 days (if appropriate), following an EPM as requested by the Admissions team, recognising the importance of re-establishing stability for looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people.

Attendance

In respect of attendance for children and previously looked-after children and young people we will:

- Celebrate good attendance and encourage all parties concerned to continually promote good attendance;
- Establish a 'first day of absence' procedure if attendance becomes a problem;
- Inform the Social Worker via email or by phone, when a child is absent for three consecutive days or more;.
- Ensure that the school's attendance officer communicates with the Virtual School link teacher who may contact the school to query attendance data from EMS; and
- Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.

Exclusion

In respect of exclusions for children and previously looked-after children and young people we will:

- Identify looked-after children and previously looked-after children and young people who are at risk of exclusion and contact Virtual School, Inclusion, the Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the pupil missing days from the school;
- In the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion, ensure that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the exclusion, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the Local Governing Body where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education; and
- In the event of any exclusion, ensure that we contact the Virtual School with details of the exclusion, outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made.

Agreed by Stockport Academy LGB October 2026

Review: **Annually**

Signed by Chair of LGB

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David Robinson (Chair)

Date

Signed by Principal

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Janine McCann (Principal)

Date

Please see the Virtual School website http://virtualschool.stockport.gov.uk for further guidance on, e.g.: Role of the Designated Teacher, Governors, SEN, G&T, Admissions, Inclusion, PEPs.