



**KING EDWARD VI
FOUNDATION
BIRMINGHAM**

Educational excellence for our City



**KING EDWARD VI
ACADEMY TRUST
BIRMINGHAM**

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Looked After Children Policy & Procedures

Responsible Board/Committee	Academy Trust and Foundation Board
Policy Type	Central Policy (Group B)
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Version	2

Policy Notes

This policy is a central policy which does not require local amendments, other than the identification of the school's Designated Teacher details and links to other policies. When the policy is approved at Foundation and Academy Trust level, the approved version will be communicated to schools. Schools should then insert the identity of the Designated Teacher and links to other policies where highlighted. This policy does not require approval by Local Governing Body.

This policy will be updated centrally on an annual basis.

KING EDWARD VI FOUNDATION LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Nationally, looked-after children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), compared with their peers. The Foundation recognises that it has a major part to play in ensuring that students within its care are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, achieve, and make a positive contribution to society, as well as to achieve economic wellbeing.

2. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy considers [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010 and the documents referenced below.

In England the [Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#) aims to ensure children in care receive high-quality care and services, which are focused on and tailored to their needs.

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) amended the Children Act 1989 to require local authorities in England to appoint at least one person to promote the educational achievement of its looked-after children.

In England, the Department for Education (DfE) has provided [guidance and regulations on care planning, placement and case review \(PDF\)](#) (DfE, 2021).

In England, schools must have a Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children. The DfE has published statutory [guidance for local authority maintained schools](#) on their roles and responsibilities (DfE, 2018b).

The DfE has also published [guidance on promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(PDF\)](#) (DfE, 2018c).

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published a guideline on [Looked after children and young people](#), which sets out how organisations, practitioners and carers should work together to deliver high-quality care, stable placements and nurturing relationships for children in care (NICE, 2021).

3. DEFINITIONS

Within this policy “the Foundation” refers to the Foundation Charity and the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham (“Academy Trust”). The Foundation Charity is a legal entity: The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham, comprising the two Independent Schools and the Foundation Office.

According to the NSPCC, a child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.

In general, looked after children are:

- living with foster parents;
- living in a residential children's home; or
- living in residential settings like schools or secure units.

There are a variety of reasons why children and young people enter care.

- The child's parents might have agreed to this – for example, if they are too unwell to look after their child or if their child has a disability and needs respite care.
- The child could be an unaccompanied asylum seeker, with no responsible adult to care for them.

- Children's services may have intervened because they felt the child was at significant risk of harm. If this is the case the child is usually the subject of a court-made legal order.

A child stops being looked after when they are adopted, returns home or turns 18. Local authorities are required to support children leaving care at 18 until they are at least 21. This may involve them continuing to live with their foster family.

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be because of any of the following:
 - A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them;
 - A special guardianship order;
 - An adoption order.
- They appear to the governing board to have:
 - Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately; and
 - Ceased to be in that state care because of being adopted.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Foundation

Helping looked-after children to succeed is a fundamental principle of the Foundation, and it is committed to providing quality education for all pupils. The Foundation will:

- ensure looked-after children and previously looked-after children are prioritised in each Academy's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006. (These require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to looked-after children and previously looked-after children in their oversubscription criteria, and Grammar schools must give top priority to children in this group who meet the entry requirements).
- ensure that each school within the Foundation identifies a Designated Teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children.

The Foundation will champion the needs of looked-after children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Head of School

- Identify a Designated Teacher for looked-after children and previously looked after children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure the procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and act where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that employees within the school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy document.

The Governing Body

- Identify a nominated Governor for looked-after children and previously looked after children.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.

- Have an overview of the needs and progress of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Monitor the academic progress of looked-after children and previously looked-after children, through an annual report. The report should set out the following:
 - The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their GCSE, BTEC and A Level results and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of the respective Academy, by ensuring looked-after children and previously looked-after children achieve and enjoy their time at the school.
- Support the Head, the Designated Teacher and other employees in ensuring that the needs of looked-after children and previously looked-after children are recognised and met.

The Designated Teacher

Their role is to act as a source of advice and expertise and to champion the needs of looked-after children within the school as well as work with the local authority that looks after the child to ensure their personal education plan (PEP) is developed and implemented.

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
 - Working with Virtual School Heads;
 - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils' matter and 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;
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities.
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs.

- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.
- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs.
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs.
- Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs.
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them to make progress and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP.
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place.
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils.
- Ensure that:
 - A looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered.
 - PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced.
 - The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan.
- Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version.
- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding.
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children.
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children.
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use.
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.
- Evidence shows that two-thirds of looked-after children have special educational needs and therefore the Designated Teacher should make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this.
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to looked-after children, is followed

- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have.
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary.
- Although looked-after children have many of the same health issues as their peers, the extent of these is often greater because of their past experiences. For example, almost half of children in care have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Delays in identifying and meeting their emotional well-being and mental health needs can have far reaching effects on all aspects of their lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults.
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services.
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs.
- Liaise with health services to inform aspects of care planning, to reduce any negative impact of a child's physical, emotional and mental health on their education.
- Health and the Designated Teacher should co-ordinate assessments and reviews of the child's care plan and EHC plan, when appropriate, to ensure that, taken together, they meet the child's needs without duplicating information unnecessarily
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children
- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children to ensure there is a clear plan for all children who return home that reflects current and previous assessments, focuses on outcomes, and includes details of services and support required
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Provide evidence to external agencies, if requested, to help assess whether the necessary improvements have been made to ensure a looked after child under a care order is safe to return home. Following an assessment, the Designated Teacher will liaise with services to help support the child returning home, including where that return home is unplanned, to ensure that the child continues to be adequately safeguarded.
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:
 - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
 - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action
 - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will

disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption

- Making sure that, if a looked-after child moves school, their new Designated Teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
 - There is an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
 - School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
 - Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion:
 - Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
 - Working with the VSH and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

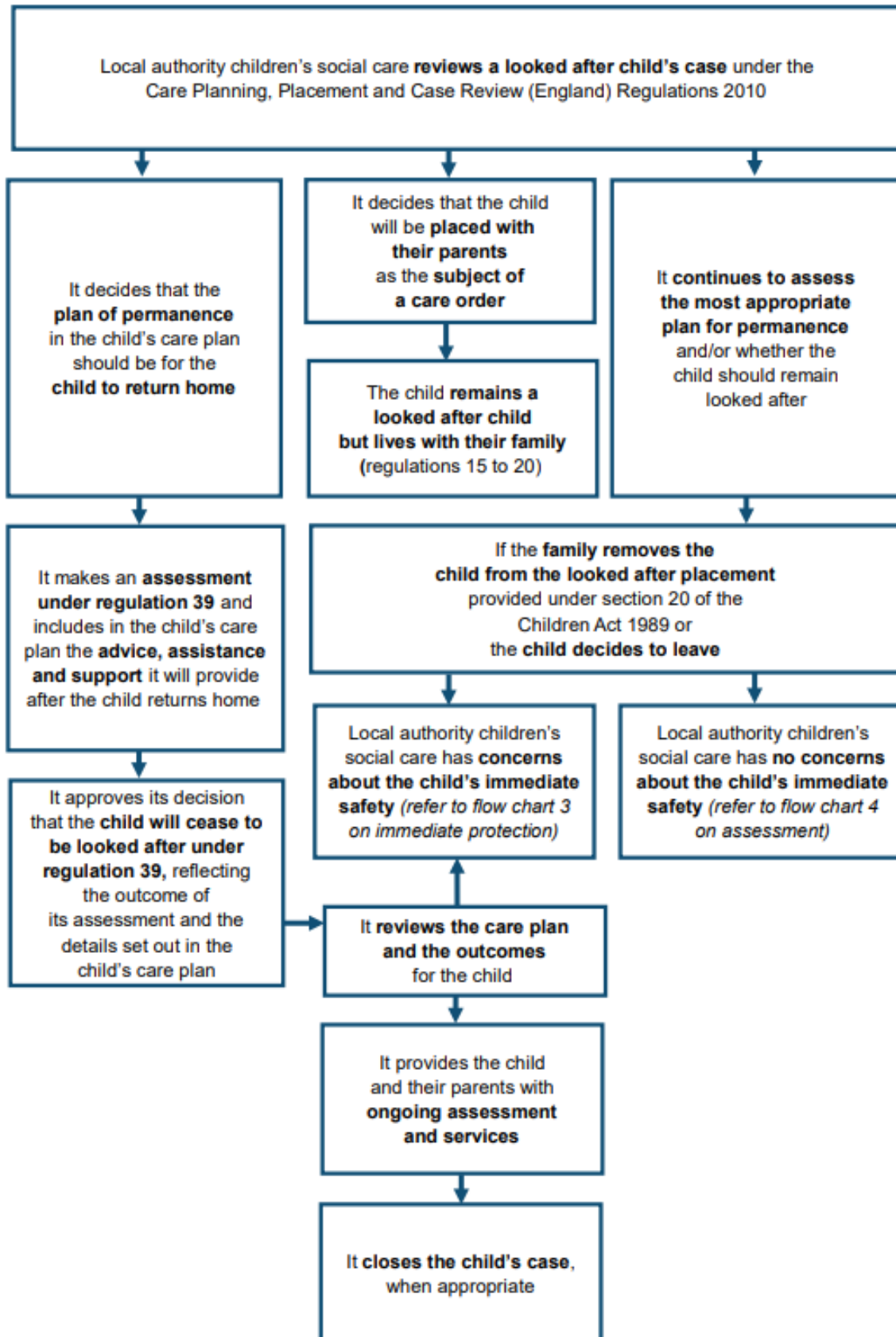
The Designated Teacher at King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy is Mr Steve Miller
You can contact them by mailing smiller@keshacademy.com

5. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Anti-bullying
- Exclusions
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Admissions

APPENDIX 1 Looked after children returning home to their families (Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023)



APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY

Kinship care

Kinship care is any situation in which a child is being raised in the care of a friend or family member who is not their parent. The arrangement may be temporary or longer term. The following are all types of kinship care arrangements however this list is not exhaustive:

- Informal kinship care arrangements (not approved foster care) including:
 - A private family arrangement in which a close family member who does not hold parental responsibility, raises the child and
 - the local authority has had no major role in making the arrangement for the child
 - where a Family Court has not made an order in respect to the care of the child.
 - Where a child under the age of 16 is being provided with accommodation for less than 28 days by an individual in their own home who is not a close relative
 - Where a 16- or 17-year-old is being provided with accommodation by an individual who is not a close relative in their own home
- A private fostering arrangement in which someone who is not a close relative of the child looks after the child for 28 days or more (as per section 66(1)(a) and (b) of the Children Act 1989).
- Where a 'lives with' child arrangements order has been granted in respect of the child, in favour of someone who is a friend or family member but is not the child's parent.
- Special guardianship is a family court order that places a child or young person in long-term care with someone other than their parent(s) e.g. a friend or family member. The person(s) with whom the child lives with will become the child's special guardian.
- Where a child is a 'looked after child' by virtue of either an interim or final care order or being accommodated by the local authority (usually under section 20 of the Children Act 1989) and each of the following apply (this may be described as 'kinship foster care' or 'family and friends foster care'):
 - The child is being cared for by a friend or family member who is not their parent, and
 - The friend or family member is approved as a local authority foster carer on a temporary basis or following full assessment.
- Where an adoption order has been granted in respect of the child and, prior to the making of the order, the adopter was a friend or family member.

NB In relation to **private fostering**, "relative" has the meaning given in section 105 of the Children Act 1989. It includes only the following: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), and stepparent (a married stepparent, including a civil partner).

For the purposes of this kinship definition, the term private fostering arrangement includes only individuals accommodating a child. It does not apply to organisations or bodies