



GEORGE ABBOT SCHOOL

Policy Title:	Looked After, and Post Looked After, Children
Author:	Assistant Headteacher / Designated Teacher
Date of most recent review:	Spring 2026
Date of next review:	Spring 2027
School Mission Statement: Academic excellence within a strong community of equality and respect, where potential and opportunity are realised.	

Key Personnel

Headteacher	Mrs Kate Carriett
Designated Teacher	Mrs Tracy Young

KEY GUIDANCE AND DOCUMENTATION

Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance (2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children: statutory guidance (2015)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children.pdf

Surrey CC Virtual School: Pupil Premium Plus (2019)

<https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/10739/pupil-premium-plus-policy-september-2019-accessible.pdf>

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803fe31c0c2a000d18cf40/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Children's Social Care National Framework (2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657c538495bf650010719097/Children's_Social_Care_National_Framework_December_2023.pdf

Children's Social Care: Stable Homes, Built on Love (2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650966a322a783001343e844/Children's_Social_Care_Stable_Homes_Built_on_Love_consultation_response.pdf

INTRODUCTION:

Looked-After Children: When a child or young person is taken into care by a local authority under a court order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority – who become their ‘Corporate Parent’. Young people can also be in care under a voluntary arrangement with parents where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, but this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but some may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). It is important the school attended by the child is aware of their care status, as many children and families are supported by social care without the use of care orders. Foster carers will very rarely hold parental responsibility – this is assumed by the social worker. Children placed for adoption remain looked after by the local authority until the final order.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is required for every child in care and forms part of their overall Care Plan. The Care Plan should be in place within six weeks of entering care and thereafter reviewed at least every term. The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard looked-after children, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to ‘achieve to reach their full potential’.

The role of a Virtual Headteacher for looked-after children is statutory for every local authority. Virtual Headteachers will scrutinise, challenge and support schools with their teaching and learning for all children in care and assist each other in this task where children cross physical borders to live and attend education provision.

Previously Looked-After Children: A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after, because he/she is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. Virtual Headteachers have a statutory duty to provide advice and support to schools in relation to their support role for previously looked-after children; and to help promote their educational achievement.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADTEACHER AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM:

- The school will promote a culture in which looked-after children and previously looked-after children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out.
- The school will appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children and a Designated Teacher for Previously Looked-After Children. This can be the same person.
- The school will ensure the Designated Teachers are able to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. This will include the provision of time to undertake the role; supporting training needs and providing opportunities for the cascade of training to all staff and governors in the school.
- The school will ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by looked-after children and previously looked-after children; and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them (a young person’s ability to engage in learning can be undermined by trauma and feelings of loss, rejection, confusion, insecurity and low self-esteem – being or becoming ‘in care’ has a major impact on children’s lives).
- The school will recognise the particular circumstances of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and provide for these in all other school policies.
- The school will ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for, individual children.
- The school is committed to working with local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- The school is committed to promoting a 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.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN:

- To have high expectations of looked-after children’s involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all looked-after children in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.

- To support the well-being and mental health of looked-after children, ensuring all needs are identified and met.
- To act as an advocate for looked-after children.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of looked-after children.
- To promote the involvement of these children in the co-curricular programme.
- To be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority children's services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners.
- To work with the Virtual School Headteacher to agree how funding (Pupil Premium +) can be most effectively used to improve looked-after children's attainment.
- To ensure every looked-after child has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) that includes appropriate educational targets and encourages the 'voice of the child' to be heard.
- To oversee the implementation as well as termly reviews of Personal Education Plans to ensure they are meeting the needs of the looked-after child.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- To work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- To provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate.
- To present, when appropriate, an annual report to the Governors and other stakeholders.
- To access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School (as a minimum requirement) and to ensure competence and compliance when working with other local authorities and across localities.
- To cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN:

- To have high expectations of previously looked-after children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all previously looked-after children in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- To support the well-being and mental health of previously looked-after children, ensuring all needs are identified and met.
- To be available to provide direct advice and support to those that have parental responsibility for previously looked-after children.
- To promote the continuing needs of previously looked-after children.
- To ensure the effective support and the educational achievement of previously looked-after children.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of previously looked after children; and provide advice for teachers and staff.
- To promote the involvement of these children in the co-curricular programme.
- To work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to, with particular vigilance around transition out of care.
- To access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School (as a minimum requirement) or other relevant virtual schools.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF:

- To be aware of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and, where appropriate, be familiar with their educational needs.
- To have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's involvement in learning, educational progress and personal development.
- To ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children are supported sensitively.
- To respond positively to a request to attend training specifically aimed at supporting looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- To respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- To promote the self-esteem of looked-after children and previously looked-after children; maintain confidentiality and ensure that no looked-after or previously looked after child is stigmatised in any way.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNORS:

- The Governors will confirm that the Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children and a Designated Teacher for Previously Looked-After Children is appointed in accordance with the regulations.
- The Governors will ensure the Designated Teachers are given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- The Governors will monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The Governors will ensure all members are briefed about the guidance on the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- The Governors will monitor the effectiveness of the role and receive, when relevant, an annual report from the Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children.
- The Governors will examine whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, such as additional funding, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for looked-after children and previously looked-after children to achieve.
- The Governors will scrutinise the schools' admission procedures to ensure students are admitted as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care.
- The Governors will champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated Teachers.

Terminology:

Looked-after child - A child is looked after by a local authority if they are provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours (section 20 Children Act 1989) or are subject to a care order (defined in section 22(1) Children Act 1989). Some of our children access children's homes for a period of up to 10 days, typically for respite care; this can be provided by the local authority without automatically leading to that child having the status of a looked-after child.

Children and young people often tell trusted adults, local and central government that the term 'looked-after children' is unhelpful, so we are moving towards the phrase, "care-experienced young person", in our school terminology. However, legislation uses the term looked-after children so it is retained within this policy.

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 arrangement; however, this list is not exhaustive:

Informal kinship care arrangements (not approved foster care) including:

- A private family arrangement in which a close relative 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; and
- 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.

Private Fostering- 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)***

Lives With- 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 (see glossary in annex [X] regarding who is a parent).

Special Guardianship Order- A special guardianship is when an order has been granted appointing a friend or family member as the child's special guardian.

Foster Carer- 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 63 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 either on a temporary basis or following full assessment.

Adoption- 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.

* 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.

*** 16- and 17-year-olds who are disabled will be deemed to be in a private fostering arrangement.

**** Pursuant to section 8 of the Children Act 1989.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Kinship Care

Definition: Kinship care means relatives or family friends look after a child when parents cannot and may be informal or formal.

Legal Status: Birth parents keep parental responsibility; caregivers have limited rights unless a formal order exists.

Decision-Making: Local authorities usually make significant decisions about the child's welfare.

Support: Support varies, and financial help is generally only available if the carer is a registered foster carer.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

Definition: An SGO is a court order granting a non-parent full parental responsibility until the child turns 18.

Legal Status: The special guardian makes major decisions without consulting birth parents or local authorities.

Decision-Making: Special guardians control day-to-day and important decisions; birth parents' rights are reduced.

Support: Financial support and a support worker might be available for special guardians.

Key Differences

Parental Responsibility: Kinship care leaves responsibility with birth parents; an SGO gives it to the special guardian.

Legal Framework: Kinship care follows fostering rules; SGOs offer more stability under specific legislation.

Local Authority Involvement: Ongoing oversight in kinship care; SGOs allow independence from direct local authority involvement.

Virtual School: the Virtual School does not exist in terms of a building and children and young people do not attend. It is a service provided by dedicated professionals within the Children, Schools and Families Directorate whose work is to promote and co-ordinate educational support for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Virtual School Head (VSH): the headteacher of the virtual school. They work strategically across the authority and with schools to monitor and support the educational achievement of looked after children as if they were in a single school. Each local authority has its own virtual school.

Designated Teacher: A Designated Teacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team who is responsible for the educational achievement of any looked-after and previously looked-after children in their school.

Personal Education Plan: A PEP is a record of the child's education and training. It describes what needs to happen for a looked-after child to help them fulfil their potential. PEPs are reviewed termly. The government has made PEPs a statutory requirement for looked-after children to help track and promote their achievements.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. Child means everyone under the age of 18.