



# MELBOURN VILLAGE COLLEGE POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Date Reviewed: March 2024

Date of Next Review: March 2025

Reviewer: Head Teacher (C Bennet)

Date of ratification by Governing Board: March 2024

Document Control		
Edition	Issued	Changes from previous
1	March 24	New policy

Policies/Documents referred to in this policy	Post holders/Persons named in this policy
<p><b>This policy links to other school policies on:</b> Attendance Positive Relationships Equality and Diversity</p> <p><b>Legislation relating to this policy:</b> Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children); Care Matters: Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 “A First-Class Education”). The Children and Young person’s Act 2008 (Duty on Schools to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care) and Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children). Promoting education of looked after children and previously looked after children. Statutory guidance for local authorities. (February 2018).</p>	<p>Head Teacher Designated teacher Designated Link Governor Governing Body</p>

As corporate parents, Melbourn Village College, is committed to do all that we can to promote the educational achievement and well being of looked after children.

Our Designated Teacher for Looked after Children is:- Niki smith  
Our Designated Governor for Looked after Children is to be appointed

This policy describes our approach to meeting the requirements set out the Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children); Care Matters: Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 “A First-Class Education”). The Children and Young person’s Act 2008 (Duty on Schools to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care) and Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children).

In line with our school ethos and principles, and our commitment to the Corporate Parenting role of being a ‘good parent’, our policy is to identify specific roles and responsibilities within school to promote the learning, progress and well being of Looked after Children.

The school recognises that the provisions outlined in this policy must be in place regardless of whether there are any looked after children currently on the school roll.

This policy was developed in partnership with Cambridgeshire Virtual School staff.

## **1 The Local Advisory Board and School commitment to enhanced support for Looked After Children**

The Local Advisory Board recognises that it is the corporate parent (any and all adults working for the Council or a school) that has responsibility and accountability for the well being and future prospects of children in their care. A good corporate parent is expected to offer everything that a good parent would.

We recognise that entering care represents a significant change in a child's life. At this stage the State takes on an immense responsibility for these children by agreeing to undertake the parental role on a day to day basis. That means that all those working for the State at a local level in this school should demand no less for each child in care than they would for their own children.

- The Local Advisory Board and School will ensure that high quality learning opportunities and education are provided for all our students.
- We will ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all.
- We recognise that Looked After Children can be especially vulnerable and are sometimes 'at risk' of failure in the learning context.

Therefore with specific reference to this cohort of children we will strive to achieve the following aims:-

## **2 Aims for our Looked After Learners**

Our aims in supporting Looked After Learners in school are:

- Ensure all school policies and procedures are followed sensitively for Looked After Children, eg, to recognise that collection of parental consent / funding for school trips may take longer for Looked After Children.
- Ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- Provide personalised learning and curriculum appropriate to needs and ability.
- Support and monitor social progress ensuring key adults prioritise respectful and responsive relationship building with individual children and provide appropriate support for social development within the peer group.
- Ensure that wherever possible Looked After Children receive a full 25 hours of education each week.
- Ensure that Looked After Children take as full a part as possible in all school activities and strive to reduce and eliminate any barriers that may stop them from taking part e.g. school trips.
- Ensure that carers, social workers and parents (as appropriate) of Looked After Children are involved and kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensure that wherever possible Looked After Children are involved in decisions affecting their learning, the plans for progress and future provision.
- Ensure that Looked after Children have access to good quality CEIAG that is aspirational for the futures.
- Ensure that success is appropriately recognised and reinforced.
- To ensure that any emerging concerns are followed up in a timely way with skill and sensitivity (e.g. changes in patterns of behaviour and attendance).
- Liaise and cooperate with appropriate partners, in particular the Virtual School Team, to ensure that all plans complement and support the promotion of the educational achievement and well being of Looked After Children.

### **3 Admissions to our School**

- The Local Advisory Board supports Cambridgeshire County Council's approach to admissions giving Looked After Children the highest priority for admission to the identified school.
- Our school will ensure that Looked After Children are named a first priority within our school written admissions criteria.
- Sometimes care placement changes lead to Looked After Children entering school mid-term or mid-year if this is thought to be in the best interests of the child. This school will ensure that in these circumstances Looked After Children will be admitted to the school in a timely manner, even if this would mean that this would increase class sizes above the recommended maximum. As necessary, we will give a positive welcome, plan entry, offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help students settle into school.

### **4 Inclusion and Allocation of Resources**

- Our policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based, and stimulating curriculum and learning programme.
- For Looked After Children there can often be a need to develop learning opportunities emphasising personalised planning and planned inclusive approaches.
- The Local Advisory board will ensure our school makes all appropriate learning provision for Looked After students. Resources are allocated to support Looked After Children in line with this policy and with our wider school teaching and learning policies and good practice.

### **5 Student Premium Plus (PP+)**

When a Looked After Child is allocated student premium plus, it is to be used for the benefit of their educational or emotional wellbeing needs. We will ensure that:

- The allocation of PP+ promotes high aspirations and seeks to secure the best educational outcomes
- For children in care, the allocation of PP+ will be linked to clear desirable outcomes as identified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and that these will be reviewed during the PEP cycle

### **6 Monitoring the Progress of Looked-After Children**

- Progress for Looked-After students in school is monitored and supported and is guided by school policies for teaching and learning.
- We will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of Looked After students at regular intervals. This will be formally reported to the Virtual School for Looked after Children (the Virtual School Team) using the relevant systems according to the Local Authority responsible for the child.
- We will ensure that the school makes an assessment of the student's needs and attainment on entry, to ensure continuity of learning.
- We recognise the importance of Electronic Personal Education Plans (EPEPs) and understand that they are statutory school documents.
- The EPEP is key to the planning and monitoring of education for a Looked After Child.
- The Designated Teacher will ensure there is an EPEP in place for all Looked After Children in school.
- The school will lead on the meeting for Cambridgeshire Looked After Children and will support those Looked After Children from other Local Authorities.
- The Designated Teacher in conjunction with the Virtual School team will ensure an EPEP takes place within 20 days of a Looked After child joining the school or becoming Looked After and termly thereafter.
- The school will consult Social Care to ascertain whether carers can be awarded access to parental documents and tools, such as 'My Child at School.'

- The school recognises that the Virtual School may wish to act as the corporate parent in requesting re-marks, reviews and appeals of public examinations and will ensure that appropriate permissions are in place with the Awarding Bodies.

## **7 Attendance and Exclusion**

- The school recognises that Looked After Children are statistically much more likely to have a poor attendance record and are up to 5 times more likely to be excluded than their non-looked after peers.
- The school will take specific steps to monitor the attendance of Looked After Children and will notify all appropriate partners at an early stage if there is an indication that problems with attendance might occur. Cambridgeshire County Council has a contract with Welfare Call Limited. A member of the Welfare Call team will call all schools with Cambridgeshire Looked After Children daily to ascertain attendance. The school will ensure this information is provided promptly and accurately.
- The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that exclusion is rarely used for Looked after Children and then is always only as a last resort, after all other avenues have been explored.
- The school will make arrangements for first day provision for any excluded Looked after Child as it would for any student after day 6 of exclusion.
- Ensure that should a looked after child be identified as at risk of permanent exclusion, then contact is made with the LA Inclusion Officer and the named contact within the Virtual School Team immediately, to enable early intervention / preventative strategies to be instigated.

## **8 Record Keeping and Information Sharing**

- Our Designated Teacher will coordinate record keeping for all looked after children in school.
- Records will include individual learning plans, up to date progress and attainment records, EPEP planning records and personalised information relating to care context as appropriate. These records will be maintained in a single place, having regard to the statutory nature of some of these documents and the confidential information that they contain.
- Looked After Child status is appropriately 'flagged' in school management information systems, ensuring information and planning records are readily available as required.
- We will ensure there is ready to access information and up to date contact details for carers, parents (where appropriate), social worker and the named contact in the Virtual School team.
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving school promptly if there is a transfer to another school.
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving school promptly if there is a transfer to another school.
- Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of the school staff team. We are guided by best practice and on the 'need to know'. Wherever possible students' wishes are taken into account in sharing information within the staff team.
- The Designated Teacher will ensure that EPEPs are reviewed prior to the statutory LAC review process. The DT will attend or arrange for someone else to attend when it is in the interest of the Looked After child, or contribute in other ways to the statutory LAC review process.

## **9 Appointments within Staff and Governing Body**

- The school recognises that there is a statutory requirement to appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- All staff and governors have a responsibility for the educational achievement and well being of Looked After Children as a corporate parent. The work of the Designated Teacher with responsibility for Looked After Children is to lead in this area, but they do not hold sole responsibility.

## 10 Staff and Governors' Development and Training

- All Staff and governors are encouraged to develop via reflective processes. We encourage ongoing engagement with relevant CPD to maintain and extend individual and team expertise in supporting Looked After Children to progress.
- Our Designated Teacher makes particular efforts to develop good awareness and understanding of issues, guidance and developments associated with the Looked After Children context. The Designated Teacher disseminates knowledge and skills to colleagues in school as appropriate and necessary. Partnership working and collaboration with the Local Authority, the Virtual School is essential here.
- There is a specific statutory expectation that the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will be released to attend a programme of training each year to maintain and extend their personal expertise when available.
- A Designated Governor will attend appropriate briefings and relevant development opportunities provided by the Local Authority, the Virtual School team.

## 11 Partnership Working

- Our school values the views of carers and parents. We firmly believe in developing strong partnerships with carers, parents and residential care workers to enable students to achieve their potential.
- We will develop close relationships and collaborative work to promote the learning and well being of individual children, both in and out of school.
- EPEP meetings, other school liaison and consultation processes and informal day to day dialogue are all seen as good opportunities to enhance our partnerships.
- We recognise the essential contributions that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. We commit to developing positive partnerships with all involved. Our partnerships with community partners are extensive; some of our key partners for these children include:

**Virtual School Team, Foster carers, residential key workers, social workers, family support workers.**

**Other Local Authority Services** (educational psychologists, SEN team, behaviour support, learning support, medical officer, school nurses, CAMH) Education Welfare Officers, social care sessional staff, community care workers, residential care staff, youth offending service, locality team workers, independent review officers, advocacy services.

## 12 School Looked After Children Policy Review and Evaluation

- Our Looked After Children policy is of highest importance.
- We will undertake a review of both policy and relevant best practices each year.
- The outcomes of this review are linked directly to school development processes and the School Development and Improvement Plan.

## 13 Previously Looked-After Children

- Local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in their area. Academies will have a Designated Teacher for previously looked-after children.
- The Virtual School and school will share information with any person that has responsibility for the child and any other person / agency that we consider appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of the named child.
- The Designated Teacher will monitor and review progress of previously looked-after children

## 14 Definitions

### Previously looked-after children

- Local authorities have a duty under section 23ZZA of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in their area by providing information and advice to:
  - any person that has parental responsibility for the child;
  - providers of funded early years education, designated teachers for previously looked-after children in maintained schools and academies; and
  - any other person the authority considers appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of relevant children.
- Previously looked-after children are those who:
  - are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or
  - were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.
- The duty applies to children who are in early years provision (secured by the local authority under section 7(1) of the Childcare Act 2006) and continues throughout the compulsory years of education where the child is in provision funded in part or in full by the state.
- VSHs are integral to ensuring that local authorities discharge their duty to provide suitable advice and information for the purpose of promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after children. They can also undertake any activity they consider appropriate where that activity will promote the educational achievement of such children in their area.

For **previously looked-after children** this should include:

- Encouraging and supporting early education settings and schools to have high expectations in helping previously looked-after children to achieve their full potential in education;
- establishing a good working relationship with the local authority's post-adoption support team so that they understand the role of the VSH and can advise adoptive parents and guardians appropriately;
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners, such as voluntary sector organisations in their area, so that the VSH and designated teachers understand the support available to previously looked-after children (e.g. mental health services), and are able to effectively liaise with service providers and signpost parents to those services;
- Where their local authority is part of a Regional Adoption Agency, cooperate with other VSHs, adoption support teams and other adoption support organisations who are also part of the Regional Adoption Agency; and
- Encouraging education settings and professionals to share expertise on what works in supporting previously looked-after children's education.

