Buckland Primary School
Children in Care Policy (also CLA)

Policy Originator	**R Hutton (Headteacher)**
Policy Responsibility	**Designated Teacher**
Review Date	**May 2027**

CONTEXT

The terms 'Looked After Children' and 'Children in Care' are often used to define the same group of children. In documents produced by the Department for Education and Surrey Virtual School (SVS), the terms Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) are preferred.

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'. Children can also be in Care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a Section 20 status known as Accommodated) where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, and this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most looked-after children will be living in foster homes but some may be in a residential children's home, semi-independent provider at post-16, living with a relative or may be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). Children placed for adoption remain looked-after by the local authority until the Final Order.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is required for every looked-after child and forms part of their Care Plan. A PEP should be initiated within ten working days and finalised a maximum for 5 working days later. PEPs should be reviewed at least once a term though more may be required if, for example, a child moves school. Children adopted from care (PLAC) do not require a PEP but it is good practice for parents to be asked whether they would like an EPAC (Education Plan for Adopted Children) to be written and regularly reviewed.

The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to "*achieve to and reach their full potential*'. The collective responsibility of Local Authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles;

The role of a Virtual Headteacher for Children in Care is now 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.

Buckland Primary School believes that in partnership with Surrey County Council, we have a special duty as Corporate Parents to safeguard and promote the education of looked-after (LAC) and previously looked-after (PLAC) children.

OUR AIM

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a steadfast belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our looked-after and previously looked-after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our looked-after and previously looked-after children, by asking the question, '***Would this be good enough for my child?***'

Buckland Primary School will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher (DT) for our looked-after and previously looked-after children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of our looked-after and previously looked-after children are prioritised at a school management level. The school governor will also support the Designated Teacher (DT) in their role as advocate and educational champion.
- Support the Designated Teacher (DT) in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend, at a minimum, statutory training provided by Surrey Virtual School (SVS) and external agencies.

The Designated Teacher (DT) will:

- Act as an advocate for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's involvement in learning and educational progress
- Monitor the educational progress of all looked-after and previously looked after children to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- Maintain an up-to-date record of all looked-after children who are on the school roll.
  This will include:
    - Status i.e., care order or accommodated.
    - Type of Placement i.e., foster, respite, residential.
    - Name of Social Worker, area office, email address and telephone number.
    - Daily contact and numbers e.g., name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
    - SEN Code of Practice
    - Child Protection information when appropriate.
    - Baseline information and all test results.
    - Attendance figures
    - Exclusions
- Ensure that there is a termly Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each child which includes appropriate targets, the child's views and above information. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g., EHCP, SEND Support Arrangements etc. Each PEP meeting will be attended by either the DT or staff member with delegated responsibility with all possible sections of the PEP completed before the meeting date.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority. Where possible, the DT will attend the first PEP at the new school to assist transition and target setting.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when looked-after Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that an appropriate staff member attends Looked-After (LAC) Reviews and/or prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Swiftly intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement or absence from school, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- Be the named point of contact for staff seeking information on the educational, social, emotional and wellbeing needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Be the named contact for liaising with carers, Surrey Children's Services and the Virtual School, ensuring the speedy transfer of information between key partners.
- Provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate, for any child leaving school in the middle or end of the academic year.
- Present regular reports to School Governors, including an Annual Report.

- Access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School (as a minimum requirement) and other external agencies. This includes ensuring all school staff are kept up to date with current legislation including DfE Statutory Guidance found here and its implication for the school in respect of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

The name of our Designated Teacher is: Mrs Rebecca E Hutton (Headteacher and LDSL) and Mr Peter De Leonardis (DHT and DDSL).

The nominated School Governor will:

- Ensure the appointment of a fully-qualified (QTS) Designated Teacher.
- Champion the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, supporting the work of the Designated Teacher by ensuring they have access to all support and training needed to fulfil their role.
- Monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of legal requirements and guidance on the education of children in care, including the DfE Statutory Guidance on https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children
- Examine whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, including Pupil Premium Plus funding, to maximise progress and attainment.
- Ensure that looked-after and previously looked-after pupils are placed on school roll without delay, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for care experienced children and young people.

The name of our nominated School Governor is: Mr David Chowings (Safeguarding Link Governor and Chair)

Policy reviewed by: Mrs R Hutton

Policy Agreed: April 2025