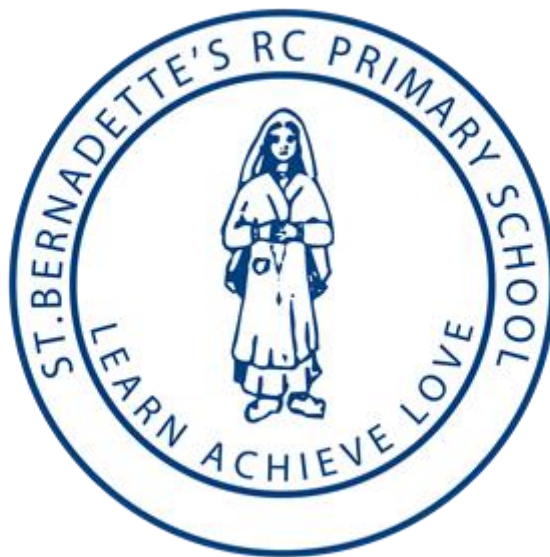


St. Bernadette's RC Primary School



Looked-after and Previously Looked-after children policy

Updated – January 2023

To be reviewed – January 2024

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Purpose

At St Bernadette's we will ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#), updated February 2018.

This policy is informed by the seven Corporate Parenting principles which are statutory for local authorities and all services working with children who are looked-after:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people

- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Definitions

Looked-after children are registered pupils that are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

Looked-after children will be referred to hereafter as Children who are Looked After, or CLA.

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

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result 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

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is part of a CLA's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

The Virtual School Head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

Identity of our designated teacher

- Our designated teacher is **Mrs G Hallsworth**

You can contact them at St Bernadette's RC Primary School by email – stbernadettessenco@bury.gov.uk

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of CLA and previously looked-after children at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

- Our link Governor is **Mrs J Grimshaw**
- St Bernadette's School works closely with Bury's Virtual School. Bury's VSH is Gemma Parkes (g.parkes@bury.gov.uk).

Role of the designated teacher

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving CLA and previously looked-after children
- Promote the educational achievement of every CLA and previously looked-after child on roll by:
 - Working with VSHs
 - Promoting a whole-school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The barriers which can affect how CLA 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 CLA and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which CLA 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 CLA and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with CLA 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 PEPs for CLA
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding CLA 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

5.2 Supporting CLA

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure the PEPs for CLA 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 CLA'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 in order 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 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

➤ Transfer a 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

5.3 Supporting both CLA and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of CLA 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 CLA 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 CLA and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of CLA and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to CLA, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in CLA and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in CLA and previously looked-after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for CLA, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of CLA and previously looked-after children
- 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
- 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 CLA, 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 CLA 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 child in care 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 CLA:
 - 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 child in care 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
 - Work with the VSH and child's carers to 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
- There is also support with transition between schools in the admissions code whereby looked after and previously looked after children have priority (criteria 1) when moving phases in education.

Monitoring and Support arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Link Governor. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

St Bernadette's RC Primary School prides itself on being a truly inclusive school. Our standards demand that we do everything we can to include and encourage ALL students with a focus on pupil premium and SEND students.

The key methods of supporting students who are CIC or PLAC include:

- Regular PEP meetings (termly)
- Day-to-day monitoring and mentoring
- Pastoral Support as and when needed provided in school
- Identification of a key worker (where necessary)
- Provision of tuition for catch-up (to be arranged via the Virtual School if appropriate)
- Provision of IT equipment
- Subsidy (sometimes total) for educational visits with more opportunities for socialisation and building attachments with peers.
- Homework club
- Access to Breakfast and After School Clubs
- CAMHS/ Barnados
- Triple P parenting courses
- School nurse service
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs)
- In-house counselling
- Time out cards
- Reasonable adjustments of sanctions
- Promotion of rewards
- Access to Rainbows Support service provided by school
- Support from Local Authority's SGO team
- Education Psychology Service
- Virtual School

School will work closely with Virtual School staff, social workers and IROs to provide anything appropriate with pupil premium plus funding.