OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

Looked After Children Policy

Looked After Children

Date	Review Date	Designated Teacher
September 2025	**August 2026**	**Mrs M Brown** **Mrs D York** **Miss A West** **Ms V Brown** **Ms K Gorton**

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff: Guidance for Local Authorities, Principals, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Proprietors of Independent Schools (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations Who Work With and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE) and (DoH)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children
- Improving the attainment of Looked After Children in primary schools (DCSF))
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)

We understand that children or young people who have been taken into care by the local authority or who have a voluntary care arrangement are known as ‘Looked After’. This is because of family breakdown, abuse, neglect or social need. Looked After Children will either be living in foster homes, children’s residential homes, living with a relative or with their natural parent(s).

We are committed to providing quality education for all our pupils including Looked After Children. It is nationally recognised that Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion when compared with their peers. Therefore, we believe we have a duty ‘to safeguard Looked After Children, to promote their educational

achievements and to ensure they are able to achieve and reach their full potential'. (Children Act 2004)

We are aware that 'children in care are too often missing out on treatment for mental health problems despite being four times more likely to experience them' ..... because they move placement too often.

We work hard to ensure children in care are 'given priority access to mental health assessments and are never refused care based on their placement or severity of their condition.'

We have a duty to:

- ensure Looked After Children are never refused a service, including mental health, on the grounds of their placement;
- in the event of oversubscription to give priority to Looked After Children;
- appoint a designated qualified teacher to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children
- ensure the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training;
- have in place a personal education plan for all Looked After Children drawn up in consultation with the local authority;
- ensure Looked After Children are involved in planning and decision making in regard to their education;
- act on any issues as highlighted in the annual report from the designated teacher.

We support all looked LookedAfter Children who have communication needs and will take in to account their wishes and feelings in their care planning and process.

'Children with communication needs include those who use non-verbal means of communication as well as a wider group of children who have difficulties in communicating with others. It may be that they cannot express themselves effectively or they may have difficulties in understanding what is being said to them.'

(Supporting looked after children with communication needs: Departmental advice for independent reviewing officers (DfE))

We ensure support staff have had the appropriate training in communication skills in order to understand Looked After Children who have communication needs.

We have a duty to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. We are aware that there are extremists groups within our country who wish to radicalise vulnerable children and to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. Periodic risk assessments are undertaken to assess the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism. School personnel must be aware of the increased risk of online radicalisation, and alert to changes in pupil's behaviour. Any concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

We are aware that under the 'Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015' we have the duty to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is

known as the Prevent duty and we believe it is essential that school personnel are able to identify those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation or being influenced by extremist views, and then to know what to do when they are identified.

We provide a safe environment where we promote pupils' welfare. Within this environment we work hard to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation and extremism by promoting fundamental British values and for everyone to understand the risks associated with terrorism. We want pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in order to challenge extremist views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates in to all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

We acknowledge the findings of the Race Disparity Audit that clearly shows how people of different ethnicities are treated across the public services of health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

The educational section of the audit that covers: differences by region; attainment and economic disadvantage; exclusions and abuse; and destinations, has a significant importance for the strategic planning of this school.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To promote the educational achievements of Looked After Children by ensuring they are able to achieve and reach their full potential.
- To help children who are looked after make positive life choices.
- To ensure children in care are 'given priority access to mental health assessments.
- To give priority consideration to Looked After Children in the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Toprotect children from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Principal

The Principal will ensure that:

- the Looked After Children policy is implemented;
- a designated teacher is in place who is an advocate for Looked After Children;
- appropriate support and training is provided for the Looked After Children teacher;
- ensure all school personnel and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities;
- in the event of oversubscription priority is given to Looked After Children;
- effective practice is provided for Looked After Children by:

  ☐ doing the things we do for all children but more so;
  ☐ balancing high levels of support with real challenge;
  ☐ skilfully linking each child to a key person they relate well to;
  ☐ making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;
  ☐ developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies ;
  ☐ making things happen and seeing things through;
  ☐ ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility;
  ☐ actively extending the horizons of each child;
  ☐ planning for future transitions.

  (Improving the attainment of Looked After Children in primary schools (DCSF))

- effective tracking procedures are in place to monitor, admissions, attendance, exclusions, progress, behaviour and support;
- data and other pupil information is in place to create an accurate record that can be handed on to the next school;
- effective behaviour management systems and measures are in place to support pupil well-being;
- a personal education plan is in place for all Looked After Children drawn up in consultation with the local authority;
- any issues as highlighted in the annual report from the designated teacher are acted on;
- children in care are given priority access to mental health assessments and are never refused care based on their placement or severity of their condition;
- there are good links with local support agencies especially Social Services;
- Looked After Children are involved in planning and decision making in regard to their education and their personal development;
- a peer support group is in place;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- work closely with the link governor and the Designated Teacher;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- the Governing Body receives an annual report that outlines the following:

  ☐ the number of Looked After Children in the school
  ☐ an analysis of test scores, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
  ☐ attendance figures compared to other pupils
  ☐ the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions compared to other pupils
  ☐ the number of complaints
  ☐ the destinations of Looked After Children pupils when they leave the school

Role of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will:

- be responsibility for helping school personnel understand how Looked After Children learn and achieve;
- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how Looked After Children learn;
- provide advice for school personnel about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning;
- ensure Looked After Children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home;
- ensure all Looked After Children and their carers receive a positive and smooth induction into the school;
- be responsible for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school;
- ensure an appropriate Personal Education Plan is completed within 20 days of Looked After Children joining the school or entering care;
- ensure each Looked After Children has an indentified fully trained member of staff, other than the Designated Teacher, that they can talk to;
- ensure strong and positive home/school relationships are in place;
- ensure Looked After Children are included in all areas of school life;
- ensure Looked After Children are not bullied in any form by actively monitoring and preventing bullying by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy;
- ensure all school personnel and governors are kept up to date on all issues relevant to Looked After Children and receive the necessary training;
- ensure all Looked After Children receive the necessary support within the school;
- ensure strong links are in place with all agencies dealing with Looked After Children;
- ensure urgent multi agency meetings will be convened if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or at risk of exclusion;
- ensure Looked After Children have full access to the National Curriculum;
- ensure out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities are promoted for Looked After Children;
- ensure procedures are in place to provide confidentiality for all Looked After Children and that access to information is on a need to know basis;
- ensure Looked After Children have a voice in setting learning targets;
- ensure realistic but challenging educational and personal targets should be set in consultation with the child;
- ensure academic progress, attendance and behaviour is tracked with appropriate support given;
- ensure all information is transferred quickly and efficiently when Looked After Children move to another school or phase;
- ensure confidentiality is adhered to and that access to information is on a need to know basis;

Role of the School Personnel

All teaching and support staff will:

- be made aware of and will be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children;
- liaise with the Designated Teacher to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability, success and to overcome any problems they may experience;
- on request provide relevant information for Personal Education Plans and review meetings;
- encourage Looked After Children to achieve their full educational and personal potential which will be celebrated at weekly achievement assemblies and the Annual Presentation of Awards;
- constantly endeavour to promote self-esteem;
- prevent bullying in line with the school's anti-bullying policy;
- accept a request to be a Looked After Children's named person to whom they can speak with when they feel it necessary;
- maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality;
- ensure Looked After Children are supported sensitively;
- be appropriately trained to deal with Looked After Children who have difficulty in communicating;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour within and outside school and not to undermine fundamental British values;
- work in partnership parents and carers keeping them up to date with their child's progress and behaviour at school;
- implement the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination;
- attend appropriate training sessions on equality;
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;
- work in partnership with the school;
- comply with this policy for the benefit of their children;
- be asked to take part periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.

Role of Looked After Children

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- be confident about themselves and to understand that they are able to achieve and reach their full potential;
- participate in discussions concerning their progress and attainment;
- work in partnership with the school by making decisions and exercising choice in relation to their educational programme;
- discuss improvements to this policy during the school year;
- review the effectiveness of this policy.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- School Handbook/Prospectus;
- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;
- Annual report to parents;
- Information displays in the main school entrance;
- Text messages
- Email
- Social media:

  - ☐ Facebook
  - ☐ Twitter
  - ☐ Virtual pin boards
  - ☐ School blog

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion;
- receive training on induction which specifically covers:

  - ☐ All aspects of this policy
  - ☐ Special Educational Needs
  - ☐ Safeguarding and Child Protection
  - ☐ Inclusion
  - ☐ Equal opportunities
  - ☐ Inclusion

- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information;
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Principal:	**Mrs M Brown**	**Date:**	**September 2025**