Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

High aspirations • Strong relationships • Effective support

Policy owner	Full Governing Body
Associated documents	Safeguarding suite
Status	Statutory policy / annually reviewed
Last revised	June 2026
Next review due	June 2027, or earlier if legislation, statutory guidance or local arrangements change

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

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1. Purpose, scope and principles

Leigh Primary School is committed to securing the best possible educational, personal and social outcomes for children who are looked after by a local authority (children in care) and children who were previously looked after. We recognise that many children have experienced disruption, loss, trauma, separation, changes of placement or school, and barriers to attendance and learning. These experiences must never lower our aspirations.

This policy sets out how the governing body, headteacher, designated teacher, staff and governors will meet their statutory responsibilities and work with children, carers, parents, social workers, Virtual School Kent and other professionals. It applies to all pupils on roll, including pupils placed at the school by another local authority.

Our approach is child-centred, strengths-based, trauma-informed, ambitious and inclusive. We will listen to each child, safeguard their privacy, maintain high expectations, remove barriers early, and promote stability, belonging, attendance, participation and achievement.

Policy principle
Every child in care and previously looked-after child will be known, valued, supported and challenged to achieve their potential.

2. Definitions

For this policy:

- Child looked after (CLA) / child in care (CiC): a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority under the Children Act 1989. This policy uses the terms CLA, CiC and looked-after child interchangeably.
- Previously looked-after child (PLAC): a child who was previously looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted, became subject to a special guardianship order or child arrangements order, or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Designated teacher (DT): the qualified teacher appointed by the governing body to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Virtual School Head (VSH): the person appointed by the local authority to promote the educational achievement of children looked after by that authority. In Kent this role is delivered through Virtual School Kent.
- Personal Education Plan (PEP): the education component of the child's care plan. Every looked-after child must have an effective PEP that is reviewed as part of the care planning and review process.

3. Legal framework and related guidance

This policy is informed by, and will be implemented in line with, current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989, including the local authority duty to safeguard and promote the welfare and educational achievement of children it looks after.
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008, including the duty on maintained school governing bodies to designate a member of staff as the designated teacher for looked-after pupils.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017, which extended relevant responsibilities to previously looked-after children.
- DfE statutory guidance: The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (2018).
- DfE statutory guidance: Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children (2018).
- School Admissions Code (2021), including the requirement to give highest priority in oversubscription criteria to looked-after and previously looked-after children.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition), including the role of the designated teacher, the Virtual School Head and Pupil Premium Plus arrangements.
- DfE pupil premium conditions of grant (current financial year), including requirements relating to Pupil Premium Plus.
- Kent County Council and Virtual School Kent procedures, ePEP arrangements and local guidance, as amended from time to time.

Where this policy conflicts with legislation or statutory guidance, legislation and statutory guidance take precedence.

4. Governance, leadership and named roles

The governing body will appoint a designated teacher and nominate a governor with responsibility for oversight of this policy. The governing body will ensure that the designated teacher has the appropriate authority, time, training, experience and support to fulfil the role.

Role	Current postholder / contact
Co-Headteachers	Jenna Halfhide and Joanne Shobbrook
Designated teacher for CLA / PLAC	Jenna Halfhide and Victoria Short
Named governor for CLA / PLAC	Karen Korvin and Nicola Rose
Designated safeguarding lead	Jenna Halfhide and Joanne Shobbrook
Virtual School	Virtual School Kent / relevant placing authority virtual school

4.1 Governing body responsibilities

- appoint a designated teacher and ensure the person is appropriately trained and supported;
- appoint a named governor to provide strategic oversight without compromising individual children's confidentiality;
- ensure the school has policies and procedures that promote high aspirations, inclusion, attendance, stability and safeguarding;
- receive an anonymised assurance report at least annually on provision, attendance, progress, exclusions, PEP quality, use of Pupil Premium Plus and key themes;
- ensure the designated teacher has sufficient capacity to undertake the statutory role effectively; and
- ensure individual children cannot be identified through governor reporting when numbers are small.

4.2 Headteacher responsibilities

- ensure the policy is implemented consistently and is integrated with safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, SEND, admissions and pupil premium arrangements;
- ensure staff are aware of the designated teacher and know how to raise concerns or seek advice;
- ensure systems enable the timely sharing of relevant information on a need-to-know basis;
- ensure that exclusion is avoided wherever possible and only used in line with legal duties, statutory guidance and the school behaviour policy;
- ensure staff training includes the educational impact of trauma, loss, placement instability and disrupted learning; and
- ensure the designated teacher is supported to work effectively with Virtual School Kent, carers, social workers and other agencies.

4.3 Designated teacher responsibilities

The designated teacher will provide strategic and operational leadership for the educational achievement of children in care and previously looked-after children. The designated teacher will:

- be the central point of contact in school for staff, carers, parents, social workers, Virtual School Kent and relevant professionals;
- promote a culture of high expectations and ensure that staff understand how care experience may affect learning, relationships, attendance and behaviour;

- lead the development, implementation, review and quality assurance of each looked-after child's PEP in partnership with the child and relevant adults;
- ensure the child's voice, strengths, interests, aspirations and preferred trusted adults are reflected in planning;
- monitor attendance, punctuality, progress, attainment, engagement, wellbeing, behaviour, participation and transitions; take early action where concerns emerge;
- work with the VSH to ensure Pupil Premium Plus is used in line with the child's PEP and agreed local arrangements;
- promote continuity of education, including when a child experiences a placement change, school move, absence or transition;
- work closely with the DSL where safeguarding concerns arise and ensure safeguarding and education planning are joined up;
- advise staff and governors, contribute to relevant training, and ensure confidentiality is maintained;
- work with parents/guardians and the VSH to support previously looked-after children, including signposting and advice where appropriate; and
- ensure records are accurate, secure and transferred promptly and safely when a pupil moves school.

4.4 All staff responsibilities

- hold high aspirations and avoid assumptions or stigma relating to care experience;
- follow agreed strategies in the PEP and any related support plans;
- provide consistent, predictable relationships and routines;
- raise attendance, wellbeing, learning or safeguarding concerns promptly with the designated teacher and/or DSL;
- maintain confidentiality and share information only on a professional need-to-know basis;
- avoid unnecessary withdrawal from learning, public labelling or approaches that may increase shame or isolation; and
- promote participation in enrichment, clubs, leadership and wider school life.

5. Supporting children looked after

For every child in care, the school will work as an active partner in the child's care planning. We will ensure that education is prioritised and that the child's experience of school is stable, aspirational and supportive.

5.1 Personalised support

- ensure a prompt, sensitive induction following admission or placement change;
- identify a trusted adult in school, informed by the child's views;
- use assessment information to plan timely academic support, including reading, writing, mathematics and wider curriculum access;
- provide pastoral, emotional literacy, nurture or therapeutic support where appropriate and professionally advised;
- use reasonable adjustments and relational approaches to support regulation, engagement and positive behaviour;
- promote good attendance through early communication, supportive planning and joint work with carers, social workers and the VSH;
- plan carefully for transition between classes, key stages and schools; and
- ensure the child has access to enrichment, clubs, trips, leadership roles and opportunities that build belonging and aspiration.

5.2 Attendance

Attendance is a priority. The designated teacher will work with the attendance lead, carers, social worker and Virtual School Kent to understand barriers, agree practical support and review impact. The school will avoid arrangements that unintentionally reduce access to education, and will use alternative provision only where lawful, appropriate and planned with relevant agencies.

5.3 Behaviour and exclusions

The school will respond to behaviour through the school behaviour policy, with a strong focus on prevention, relationships, regulation and restorative approaches. We recognise that exclusion can be particularly damaging for a child in care. The headteacher will ensure that any consideration of suspension or permanent exclusion is treated as a last resort, is lawful, proportionate and informed by the child's circumstances, PEP and safeguarding needs. The designated teacher will be involved at the earliest stage and Virtual School Kent / the placing authority will be notified in line with local procedures.

6. Supporting previously looked-after children

Previously looked-after children may continue to experience barriers related to earlier trauma, loss or disrupted attachments. The school will provide sensitive, non-stigmatising support and will work in partnership with parents, special guardians or child arrangements order holders.

- Parents/guardians may choose to share the child's status; the school will handle any information sensitively and confidentially.
- The designated teacher will be a point of contact for parents/guardians who have concerns about progress or wellbeing.
- With parental consent where required, the designated teacher may seek advice from Virtual School Kent or the relevant VSH.
- The school will ensure eligible PLAC are included appropriately in pupil premium strategy planning and that funding is used to support their individual needs.
- PLAC do not require a PEP, but the school may use other personalised planning tools, such as a pupil profile, provision map or support plan, where helpful and agreed with the parent/guardian.

7. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Every looked-after child must have a high-quality PEP that forms part of their care plan. The PEP is a living document, not merely a meeting record. It should set out the child's educational needs, strengths, aspirations, support, targets, use of resources and progress.

7.1 PEP expectations

- PEPs will be completed and reviewed in line with the placing authority's care planning timetable and Virtual School arrangements.
- The child's voice will be gathered in a developmentally appropriate way and will influence the plan.
- Targets will be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, with clear responsibilities and review dates.
- The PEP will address academic progress, attendance, wellbeing, behaviour, safeguarding, SEND, participation, enrichment and transition where relevant.
- The PEP will identify support and how impact will be evaluated.
- Where Pupil Premium Plus is requested or allocated, the planned use will be clearly linked to needs and expected outcomes in the PEP.
- The designated teacher will ensure school information is accurate, current and shared in a timely way for PEP and care plan reviews.

Quality assurance
A strong PEP identifies what is working, what needs to change, who is responsible, how progress will be measured and when the next review will take place.

8. Pupil Premium Plus and use of resources

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is intended to improve the educational outcomes of eligible children. For children in care, funding is managed by the local authority / Virtual School Head; for previously looked-after children, funding is allocated to the school through pupil premium arrangements. The school will follow the current DfE conditions of grant and local Virtual School Kent processes.

- PP+ will be used strategically and linked to assessed need, the PEP for children in care, and the school's pupil premium strategy for PLAC.
- Decisions will be evidence-informed, proportionate and focused on improving educational outcomes, engagement, attendance, wellbeing or access where these are barriers to achievement.
- The designated teacher will work with the VSH on plans for children in care and will not assume PP+ is an automatic personal budget.
- The school will evaluate impact and amend provision where it is not achieving the intended outcome.
- As at the 2026-27 DfE grant year, the national PP+ rate is £2,690 per eligible pupil; this rate is reviewed annually and is not a fixed entitlement to an individual child or school.

9. Safeguarding, wellbeing, attendance and behaviour

Children in care and previously looked-after children are not a homogeneous group. Individual experiences, strengths, identities and needs vary. Staff will avoid diagnostic assumptions and will respond to the child in front of them.

- The designated teacher will work closely with the DSL so that education, care and safeguarding plans are coordinated.
- All safeguarding concerns, disclosures or indicators of harm will be managed in line with the school safeguarding policy and statutory procedures.
- Staff will support emotional wellbeing through consistent relationships, predictable routines, inclusive practice and access to appropriate pastoral support.
- Attendance concerns will be addressed early and collaboratively, including with the child, carer, social worker, attendance lead and VSH as appropriate.
- Behaviour support will be relational, restorative and proportionate, while maintaining clear expectations and safeguarding boundaries.
- The school will challenge bullying, stigma and discrimination, including comments or behaviours linked to care status.

10. Admissions, transition and mobility

The school admission arrangements will give the highest priority in oversubscription criteria to looked-after children and previously looked-after children in accordance with the School Admissions Code. When a child joins the school, the designated teacher will coordinate a sensitive induction with the child, carer, social worker and relevant professionals.

- provide a prompt welcome, tour, timetable, peer support and key adult contact;
- avoid unnecessary delays to admission, assessment or access to the full curriculum;
- ensure records and support information are transferred securely and promptly when a child moves school;
- plan transitions between year groups and phases with the child's voice and emotional wellbeing in mind; and
- work with the VSH and receiving setting to maintain continuity during any move.

11. Information sharing, confidentiality and records

Information about a child's care status is sensitive personal information. It will be held securely, processed in line with data protection law and the school's data protection policy, and shared only with staff and professionals who need it to fulfil their responsibilities. Staff will not discuss a child's status in front of peers or share information beyond what is necessary.

- PEPs and related records will be stored securely with controlled access.
- Information will be transferred securely when a child moves school.
- Reports to governors will be anonymised and sufficiently aggregated to prevent identification.
- The child and carers/parents will be involved appropriately in decisions about information sharing, subject to safeguarding, legal and professional obligations.

12. Monitoring, reporting and review

The headteacher and designated teacher will monitor the implementation and impact of this policy. The governing body will receive an anonymised annual assurance report. Where numbers are small, data will be presented in a way that protects confidentiality.

- attendance and persistent absence;
- attainment and progress, including key stage information where relevant;
- PEP completion, quality and review timeliness;
- participation in wider opportunities and enrichment;
- behaviour incidents, suspensions and exclusions;
- pastoral and academic support provided and its impact;
- PP+ planning and evaluation; and
- feedback from pupils, carers/parents and relevant professionals.

This policy will be reviewed annually, and sooner where there are relevant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, DfE grant conditions or Kent / Virtual School Kent arrangements.

Appendix A - Designated Teacher Checklist

The checklist below supports the designated teacher to evidence key responsibilities. It is not a substitute for statutory guidance or Virtual School Kent procedures.

Area	Key assurance	RAG / date	Notes / action
Leadership	Named DT is a qualified teacher; role, training and capacity are confirmed.		
Knowledge	Staff know the DT, understand confidentiality and receive relevant training.		
PEPs	All CiC have timely, child-centred, reviewed PEPs.		
Pupil voice	Child views, strengths, aspirations and trusted adult are recorded and acted upon.		
Progress	Attendance, attainment, progress, wellbeing and participation are monitored.		
PP+	Use of PP+ is linked to need, agreed processes and measurable impact.		
Safeguarding	DT and DSL work together; concerns are acted on promptly.		
Transition	Induction and transfer arrangements minimise disruption.		
PLAC	Parents/guardians know how to seek advice; pupil premium needs are considered.		
Governance	Annual anonymised assurance report completed and reviewed.		

Appendix B - Annual Governing Body Assurance Report Template

Report period: _____ Prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Area	Summary / assurance / planned action
Number of CiC and PLAC (do not identify individuals)	
Attendance and persistent absence	
Attainment and progress	
PEP completion and quality	
PP+ planning and impact	
Academic interventions and impact	
Pastoral / wellbeing support and impact	
Participation, enrichment and pupil voice	
Behaviour, suspensions and exclusions	
Transitions / admissions / mobility	
Staff training and policy compliance	
Governor challenge and next steps	

Appendix C - PEP Quality Assurance Prompts

- Is the child's voice clear and evidenced? Does it include aspirations, strengths, worries, interests and what helps?
- Are attainment, progress, attendance, wellbeing and participation information current and accurate?
- Are targets ambitious, specific and measurable, with named people responsible and clear review dates?
- Does the plan explain how interventions, PP+ and wider support connect to identified need?
- Is the support likely to improve outcomes, and is there a clear plan for evaluating impact?
- Have transitions, placement stability, transport, attendance, SEND and safeguarding issues been considered where relevant?
- Is the plan written in respectful, strengths-based language and free from unnecessary personal or sensitive detail?

Appendix D - Current References

The following references were checked for this June 2026 revision. School staff should use the latest versions at the point of implementation:

- Department for Education. The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: statutory guidance for maintained schools (2018).
- Department for Education. Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children: statutory guidance (2018).
- Department for Education. Keeping children safe in education (current edition; 2025 edition in force at the time of revision).
- Department for Education. School Admissions Code (2021).
- Department for Education. Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant (current financial year; 2026-27 at the time of revision).
- Kent County Council / Virtual School Kent. Current local ePEP, attendance and designated teacher arrangements.

Web source list reviewed for this revision: GOV.UK statutory guidance collection; GOV.UK designated teacher and promoting education guidance; GOV.UK pupil premium conditions; GOV.UK School Admissions Code; DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education; and Kent County Council / KELSI guidance.