Marple Hall School

Policy Document

Looked after Children

Staff responsible for policy: C Gregory/ M Woodcock

Date reviewed: Spring 2025

Date approved by Governors: ……

Signed by Chair of Committee: ……..

Signed by Headteacher: .....

Date for next review: Spring 2027

STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Services to People

Marple Hall School

Policy for Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

At Marple Hall school we believe that all looked after children and previously looked after children should have every opportunity to access excellent educational provision and achieve their full potential. We, as a school community, aim to be champions for looked after children and previously looked after children. We address any underachievement and aim to bring their attainment more in line with that of non-looked after children so that they experience improved outcomes in every aspect of their lives, now and in the future as an adult.

1. How do we promote the education and welfare of our looked after and previously looked after children?

At Marple Hall School School we will:

- provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children
- endeavour to close the gap between the educational attainments of our looked after children, previously looked after children and our non-looked after children
- make sure that looked after and previously looked after children have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to appropriate support

- identify our role to promote and support the education of our looked after children and previously looked after children

- appoint a designated member of staff for looked after and previously looked after children who will take an active role in promoting each young person's attainment and ensure that their wider needs are met. Our designated member of staff will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate), social worker and the Virtual School on a wide variety of educational and care issues

- promote personalised learning

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for looked after children and previously looked after children by ensuring that the relevant personnel with responsibility for looked after children and previously looked after children have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and carry out their duties.

2. How do we achieve a whole school approach?

- our school celebrates the achievements of looked after children and previously looked after children
- all our staff have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition
- the young person will have a special, trusted adult in school who is able to take time to listen to them
- our staff are aware that being in care has a major impact on a child's life. Due consideration of this is given in all areas of the child's school life
- all of our staff are made aware of the needs of looked after children, previously looked after children and actively promote their best interests
- all adults in school are sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status
- we ensure that looked after children and previously looked after children are listened to, and have access to support and counselling in school if required
- our staff are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem
- our staff are aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers
- effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established in accordance with the school's policy on looked after children and previously looked after children
- systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about looked after children and previously looked after children
- staff actively take part in training to help them fulfil their roles in relation to looked after and previously looked after children, in particular, attachment and trauma training
- the designated member of staff ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained
- our school supports the engagement of looked after and previously looked after children in out of school hours learning
- our staff work in partnership with parents, carers and agencies
- we support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance; for young looked after children, there is clarity in relation to who is and who is not allowed to collect the child from school

3. **Our operational designated member of staff for looked after and previously looked after children is:** Matt Woodcock, Operational Safeguarding Lead (OSL)

As the designated teacher must be a senior leader, Claire Gregory undertakes this role but with the agreement that not all aspects of the role of the designated teacher need necessarily be carried out by a single individual or by a qualified teacher. While lead responsibility for raising attainment of looked after and previously looked after children on roll must rest with the designated teacher, our school decides that the functions within the role, including pastoral and administrative tasks, are appropriately delegated to the OSL.

Our operational designated member of staff will:

- ensure that the school does everything possible to maximise educational stability for the child
- robustly track the educational progress and attendance of all looked after children and previously looked after children on the school roll including Stockport LAC and LAC from other LAs (OLAs)
- maintain detailed individual records on all looked after children and previously looked after children
- prepare an annual report for the governing body and additional information as required
- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations amongst the whole school community regarding looked after children and previously looked after children's achievements and attainment
- liaise with virtual school
- ensure that looked after children and previously looked after children have equitable access to school resources and initiatives, and ensure effective use of pupil premium plus
- ensure that every effort is made to enable looked after children and previously looked after children access a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting their learning targets and reviewing their progress
- be a source of advice for staff about teaching strategies appropriate for individual children
- make sure that looked after children and previously looked after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- have the lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school
- in conjunction with the social worker, ensure that the PEP is in place within 14 days of starting at our school and that it is circulated within 10 days of the PEP meeting
- ensure that the PEP is updated and available for the statutory LAC review
- help looked after children and previously looked after children make a smooth transition to their new school or college, including making sure there are effective arrangements in place for the speedy transfer of information
- ensure that there is an agreed process in place for how the school works with other agencies
- ensure that school policies, e.g. home school agreements, are communicated to social workers and carers

4. **Our designated school governor for looked after and previously looked after children is the safeguarding governor: Tamara Patton**

The governing body, head teacher and school leadership team, in support of the designated staff member, agree that:

- The designated teacher and operational member of staff have appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked after and previously looked after children.

- The designated teacher and operational member of staff have appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked after and previously looked after children and act as a champion for them.

- The designated teacher and operational member of staff have training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked after and previously looked after children, including a good knowledge of SEN *(Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children – statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018).*

- Relevant information about LAC children in school will be included in the HT and SLT annual report~~:~~

- The governing body will give careful and due consideration to the designated member of staff's report and act on any issues it raises so as to support the designated member of staff and maximise the impact of the role.

5. Our virtual school link teacher for Stockport LA is: Jonathan King

We will:

- work in partnership with the virtual school
- contribute to regular monitoring meetings with the virtual school
- seek support from the virtual school when required
- notify the virtual school of any attendance issues, exclusions or changes in the child's circumstances
- provide the virtual school with data e.g., teachers assessments, targets, exam results, attendance rates, etc as required

6. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

We will:

- in conjunction with the social worker, hold and chair a PEP meeting and subsequent PEP reviews
- ensure that there is a PEP for each child to include appropriate targets. This will be integral to the child's care plan held by social worker and form part of any other school plan e.g. EHCP, transition plan, pastoral support programme
- ensure, in conjunction with social workers, that all looked after children have a high quality PEP in place within 14 days of starting our school. PEPs will be effective and include SMART educational objectives and targets in the PEP action plan
- detail the effective, planned spend of the pupil premium plus, including costings and impact
- following the writing of a PEP, implement the educational recommendations in the PEP action plan ensuring that all relevant staff are clear about their responsibilities and tasks
- manage and review the PEP within expected timescales. The PEP will be reviewed termly and more frequently updated if required, e.g. change of care placement, action plan needs modifying, etc

- circulate the PEP and PEP reviews to relevant people within 10 working days

7. Additional or Special Educational Needs or Disability

We will:

- quickly identify additional needs and make appropriate provision within school resources
- ensure equal access to additional interventions, e.g. 1:1 tuition, etc
- ensure looked after children and previously looked after children are prioritised for referrals to the school's educational psychologist, Learning Support Service teacher and other agencies
- ensure that systems are in place to identify underachievement and prioritise interventions at an early stage
- contact the virtual school as soon as concerns start to emerge
- collate all relevant paperwork and evidence if an EHCP assessment is likely to be required

8. Admissions and Transitions

We will:

- ensure that all applications for new admissions or transfers are processed through Stockport's admissions team
- ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience
- prioritise looked after children and previously looked after children within school's own admissions procedures and aim to admit pupils in less than 20 days (if appropriate), following an education planning meeting as requested by the admissions team, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for looked after children and previously looked after children

9. Attendance

We will:

- celebrate good attendance and encourage all parties concerned to continually promote good attendance
- establish a 'first day absence procedure where contact home is made when attendance becomes a problem
- inform the social worker when a child is absent for three consecutive days or more
- ensure that the school's attendance officer communicates with the virtual school link teacher who may contact school to query attendance data

10. Suspension and Exclusion

We will:

- identify any looked after child or previously looked after child who is at risk of suspension or exclusion and contact virtual school, education access team, social worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the looked after child or previously looked after child missing days from school
- avoid suspension of a looked after child or previously looked after child whenever possible

- ensure, in the case of a suspension or exclusion, that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the social worker have been informed. Within one day a letter has been sent specifying the suspension period, the reasons for the suspension, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representation to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements which will enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education
- in the event of any suspension or exclusion, give details of the reasons to virtual school so that an appropriate response can be made

Signed

Headteacher: ……...

Designated teacher for looked after children and previously looked after children:

……...

Designated operational member of staff for looked after children and previously looked after children:

……...

Designated governor for looked after children and previously looked after children:

……...

Date: …… **Review date:** …….

Please see the virtual school website https://www.stockport.gov.uk/virtual-school-for-children-in-care for further guidance