



LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Barnet Early Years Alliance (BEYA)

Applies to	Brookhill, St Margaret's and Hampden Way Nursery Schools
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Policy lead	Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

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Statement of intent

BEYA is committed to ensuring that looked-after and previously looked-after children feel safe, known, valued and that they belong. We recognise that experiences of care, loss, separation and change can affect children in different ways. We have high expectations for every child and will work closely with families, carers, social workers, the Virtual School and other professionals to remove barriers, promote wellbeing and enable each child to thrive.

As maintained nursery schools, our approach is rooted in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in BEYA's core beliefs of Play, Joy and Belonging. We will respond to each child as an individual, build secure and consistent relationships, promote regular attendance and participation, and ensure that learning, development and wellbeing are considered together.

1. Legal framework and related policies

This policy has due regard to current legislation and statutory or national guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE, Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- DfE, The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current statutory guidance)
- DfE, Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (effective 26 July 2026)
- DfE, Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension (current non-statutory guidance)

This policy should be read alongside BEYA's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions arrangements/policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Data Protection/Information Governance arrangements

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- A looked-after child (LAC) is a child who is in the care of a local authority, or is provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, as defined by section 22 of the Children Act 1989.
- A previously looked-after child is a child who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because they became subject to an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order, or a child adopted from state care outside England and Wales, in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance.
- The designated teacher is the qualified teacher appointed by the governing body to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

- The Virtual School Head (VSH) is the local authority officer with statutory responsibilities for promoting the educational achievement of children looked after by that authority and specified duties in relation to previously looked-after children.

3. Principles and aims

BEYA will:

- promote high aspirations and the best possible educational and developmental outcomes for looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- provide a safe, stable and inclusive environment in which children experience belonging and trusted relationships;
- ensure access to high-quality early education and the full EYFS curriculum, with appropriate adaptations where needed;
- identify and remove barriers to attendance, learning, participation, relationships and wellbeing;
- recognise the possible impact of trauma, loss, separation and disrupted relationships without making assumptions about an individual child;
- work in partnership with children, parents, carers, social workers, the VSH and other professionals;
- ensure that decisions and support are informed by the child's voice, communication, interests and lived experience in ways appropriate to their age and development.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Governing body

- Ensure that the school has an appropriately trained designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that the designated teacher has sufficient time, support and resources to carry out the role effectively.
- Ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to support looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Receive an annual report on the provision, progress, attendance and wellbeing of looked-after and previously looked-after children, presented in a way that protects individual children's confidentiality.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and ensure that looked-after and previously looked-after children have equitable access to the curriculum and wider nursery life.

4.2 Executive Headteacher

- Ensure this policy is implemented across BEYA and that the designated teacher is enabled to fulfil the statutory role.
- Promote a culture of high expectations, inclusion and sensitivity to the experiences of children who are or have been in care.
- Ensure appropriate information is shared with governors without identifying individual children unnecessarily.

4.3 Designated teacher

- Promote the educational achievement, development and wellbeing of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Be the main education contact within BEYA for the child's social worker, VSH and other relevant professionals.
- Lead the development and use of the PEP for each looked-after child and ensure agreed actions are implemented and reviewed.
- Ensure that the child's voice is reflected in planning in an age- and developmentally-appropriate way, including through observation, communication, interests and trusted relationships.
- Work with the SENCO, DSL, key person and other staff so that educational, SEND, safeguarding and wellbeing needs are considered together.

- Advise staff about effective, relational and inclusive approaches, including how experiences of trauma, loss, separation and disrupted attachment may affect learning, relationships, behaviour and emotional wellbeing.
- Promote regular attendance and respond promptly to emerging attendance concerns.
- Work with the VSH/social worker regarding the appropriate use of funding for looked-after children and ensure impact is reviewed.
- Support parents and carers of previously looked-after children by signposting or seeking advice from the relevant VSH where appropriate.

4.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Maintain up-to-date details of the social worker and relevant local authority contacts for looked-after children.
- Work closely with the designated teacher and relevant professionals so that safeguarding information is shared appropriately and the particular vulnerabilities of looked-after and previously looked-after children are recognised in safeguarding practice.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with BEYA's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current statutory guidance.

4.5 SENCO

- Work with the designated teacher, key person, parents/carers and relevant professionals to identify and meet SEND needs.
- Ensure that PEP, SEND support and, where applicable, EHC plan processes are aligned and do not create unnecessary duplication.
- Contribute to reviews and transitions where SEND is a factor.

4.6 All staff

- Know which children require relevant support where this information is necessary for their role, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Provide consistent, sensitive and inclusive support and maintain high expectations.
- Be alert to changes in attendance, behaviour, presentation, relationships or wellbeing and share concerns promptly through the appropriate safeguarding or pastoral route.
- Avoid assumptions, labels or unnecessary disclosure about a child's care status.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Every looked-after child must have a PEP as an integral part of their care plan. BEYA will contribute actively to the PEP and use it as a living plan for the child's education and development.

For nursery-aged children, the PEP will be proportionate, child-centred and relevant to the EYFS. It should consider, as appropriate:

- the child's strengths, interests, communication and ways of expressing their views;
- learning and development across the EYFS, with particular attention to identified needs and barriers;
- personal, social and emotional development, relationships and sense of belonging;
- communication and language and physical development;
- attendance, participation and any barriers to regular access to provision;
- SEND, health or therapeutic needs and how these interact with learning;
- support needed following changes in placement, family circumstances or care arrangements;
- planned use of relevant funding and the intended impact;
- transition arrangements, particularly transition into Reception or a new setting.

The designated teacher will work with the social worker, VSH, carers and other professionals to ensure that actions are clear, implemented promptly and reviewed. The child will be involved in ways that are meaningful for their age, communication and development.

6. Working with other agencies and the Virtual School Head

BEYA will work collaboratively with the child's social worker, the relevant VSH, carers and other professionals. The school will:

- share relevant educational, attendance, safeguarding and developmental information lawfully and proportionately;
- contribute to PEP and care review processes and provide reports when required;
- raise emerging concerns promptly rather than waiting for a scheduled review;
- support continuity when a child moves setting or care placement, including timely transfer of relevant information;
- seek advice from the VSH where this would strengthen provision or help remove barriers.

The VSH's statutory responsibilities differ for looked-after and previously looked-after children. For looked-after children, the VSH has a direct role in promoting and monitoring educational achievement. For previously looked-after children, the VSH provides information and advice to schools and parents/carers rather than routinely monitoring individual children.

7. Funding: Early Years Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus

BEYA will use the funding route that applies to the child's age and circumstances. For eligible looked-after children in early years provision, this may include Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP); for eligible school-age children the relevant arrangements may include Pupil Premium Plus (PP+).

Where funding is available, the designated teacher will work with the VSH and social worker as appropriate to ensure that its use is linked to identified needs and intended outcomes in the PEP. The impact of funded support will be reviewed. Funding will not automatically be allocated to an individual child in a fixed amount where local authority arrangements allow it to be managed to meet identified needs across the cohort.

8. Training and staff awareness

The designated teacher will undertake appropriate training and keep their knowledge current. Relevant staff will receive information, advice or training appropriate to their role, including on:

- the responsibilities of the designated teacher and VSH;
- safeguarding and information sharing;
- attendance and transitions;
- SEND and inclusive practice;
- relational and trauma-aware practice without lowering expectations;
- the educational and developmental needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

9. Emotional wellbeing and mental health

BEYA recognises that some looked-after and previously looked-after children may experience social, emotional or mental health needs linked to their individual experiences. Staff will focus on the child's strengths as well as needs and will not assume that care experience determines a child's presentation.

The designated teacher, DSL, SENCO and key person will work with carers and relevant professionals to identify concerns, put appropriate support in place and seek specialist advice where needed. BEYA will contribute to assessments of emotional health and wellbeing when requested by the local authority or relevant professionals and will use its knowledge of the child to inform appropriate support.

10. Suspension and permanent exclusion

BEYA will have regard to current DfE statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion. Given the age of children attending BEYA, the emphasis will be on early identification of need, relational support, reasonable adjustments, partnership with families and professionals, and removing barriers to successful inclusion.

Where there are significant concerns about the behaviour or inclusion of a looked-after child, the designated teacher will involve the VSH and social worker at the earliest appropriate stage. Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be considered in accordance with statutory guidance and BEYA's Behaviour Policy, after appropriate support and alternatives have been considered.

11. Children with SEND

Looked-after and previously looked-after children with SEND are entitled to the same statutory SEND processes and protections as other children. BEYA will ensure that care status does not obscure SEND, and that SEND does not obscure the impact of a child's wider experiences.

- The designated teacher and SENCO will work closely together.
- For looked-after children, SEND support and any EHC plan will be considered alongside the PEP and care plan.
- Parents/carers, social workers, the VSH and specialists will be involved as appropriate.
- Transitions will be planned carefully, with relevant information shared promptly and securely.

12. Children with a social worker and children in kinship care

BEYA recognises the extended strategic role of Virtual School Heads in promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker, including those who have previously had a social worker within the scope of current guidance, and children in kinship care.

This extended role is distinct from the VSH's statutory duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. It is primarily a strategic role and does not mean that the VSH routinely tracks or intervenes in individual cases. BEYA may seek advice, training or strategic support from the Virtual School where appropriate and will continue to work directly with the child's allocated professionals.

13. Information sharing and confidentiality

Information about a child's care status is sensitive personal information and will be shared only where there is a lawful and appropriate reason to do so. BEYA will ensure that:

- staff receive only the information they need to fulfil their role and keep the child safe;
- records are stored securely and access is appropriately restricted;
- relevant information is shared promptly with the local authority, social worker, VSH and other professionals where necessary and lawful;
- information needed to support continuity and safeguarding is transferred securely when a child moves setting;
- reports to governors are anonymised so that individual children cannot be identified.

14. Monitoring and review

The designated teacher and Executive Headteacher will monitor implementation of this policy. The governing body will receive appropriate assurance about provision for looked-after and previously looked-after children while maintaining confidentiality.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where there is a significant change to legislation or statutory guidance.

Next scheduled review: Autumn 2027.