South Farnham Educational Trust

The Continual Pursuit of Excellence

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

REVIEW DATE:	AUTUMN 2026
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	AUTUMN 2027

SFET South Farnham Educational Trust

Introduction & Purpose of Policy

Highfield South Farnham School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. 'Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children' (DfE, 2018) states that "Looked-after and previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs." They are therefore vulnerable to underachieving and we recognise our responsibility in ensuring that these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential.

A 'Looked-After Child' is defined is Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 as "a child (0-18 years of age) who is subject to a care order (or an interim care order) or who is accommodated by the local authority."

'Previously Looked-After Children' are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the SEND, Inclusion, Pupil Premium and Teaching and Learning policies.

Looked-After Children or Previously Looked-After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others.
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behavioural issues.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private.

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. We are committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- A Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children
- Engage with the Virtual School to create and maintain the Personal Education Plan (PEP) for Looked-After Children
- Staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- Effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Statutory guidance published in 'Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children' (DfE, 2018) states that all looked-after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part. We at Highfield South Farnham School recognise our responsibility for contributing to the creation and maintenance of this document and work in collaboration with the Virtual School to ensure that all the needs of the Looked-After Child are being met.

The PEP should:

- Be initiated as part of the care plan.
- Be an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked-after children to enable them to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- Reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances.

The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, designated teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will work closely together. All of those involved in the PEP process at all stages should involve the child (according to understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent and/or relevant family member.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher should:

- Be an advocate for Looked-After Children.
- When new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status.
- Liaise with the Virtual School to maintain the PEP
- Ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to(this should be based on the child's request and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher).
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible.
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Encourage Looked-After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, wherefeasible.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger ofbeing excluded.

Role & Responsibility of All Staff

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of relevant documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, asappropriate.
- As with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way.
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting.
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children

Role & Responsibility of the Governing Body

The governing body of this school will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked-After Children.
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked-After Children and how many (no names).
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children.
- Support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked-AfterChildren are met.
- Nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and providesfeedback to the governing body (These reports should not include any names of individual children for childprotection and confidentiality reasons).
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

Confidentiality

- Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know basis".
- The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.