CUBITT TOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Every child grows • Every voice matters • Every day counts

This policy applies to staff, governors, carers and partner agencies

Date agreed	29 September 2026
Review	Annually
Designated Teacher	Angie Drew, Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) and SENCo
Link Governor for Looked After Children	[name]

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1. Our vision and values

At Cubitt Town Primary School, **together we strive for excellence**. We are committed to providing a calm, safe and supportive environment in which Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) can thrive. We recognise that many of these children have experienced trauma, neglect or loss, which can affect their mental health, behaviour, learning and relationships.

Every child grows	Every voice matters	Every day counts
We have high expectations for every care-experienced child, and use targeted support and Pupil Premium Plus to help them make strong progress.	The child's views are at the heart of their Personal Education Plan and every decision about them. Carers are valued partners.	For a child in care, school is often the one constant. We follow up any absence on the first day and provide stability every day.

Our 6C values guide our work: **care** for each child as a corporate parent would; **communicate** openly with carers, social workers and the Virtual School; **collaborate** as a team around the child; stay **curious** about what a child's behaviour is telling us; **challenge** low expectations and stereotypes; and show **commitment** to being stable, predictable adults in the child's life.

2. Aims

- To narrow the gap in attainment and progress between LAC/PLAC and their peers.
- To act as an advocate within the framework of corporate parenting, promoting and supporting the education of our looked after children.
- To provide an inclusive, trauma-informed environment that avoids exclusionary sanctions.
- To work in close partnership with carers, adoptive parents, special guardians, social workers and the Tower Hamlets Virtual School.

Definitions

- **Looked After Children (LAC):** children in the care of a local authority, for example in foster care, residential care or placed with relatives under a care order.
- **Previously Looked After Children (PLAC):** children who have left care in England or Wales through adoption, a special guardianship order (SGO) or a child arrangements order (CAO), or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- **Kinship care:** children raised by a relative or friend who is not their parent, under a formal or informal arrangement.

3. Statutory framework

This policy takes account of:

- the **Children Act 1989 and 2004** and the **Children and Families Act 2014**;
- the DfE statutory guidance **The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children** and **Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children**;
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**, which recognises the particular vulnerability of care-experienced children, and the importance of treating absence as a safeguarding concern;
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** (updated March 2026), including Family Help, multi-agency working, and an anti-racist, culturally informed approach;

- the **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026**, including the introduction of a single unique identifier to support faster sharing of information when children move schools;
- the **Equality Act 2010**, preventing disadvantage because of care status or any protected characteristic;
- the DfE guidance **Working together to improve school attendance** and **Arranging alternative provision**.

The wider role of the Virtual School

The Tower Hamlets Virtual School Head (VSH) promotes the education of looked after children and, more strategically, of previously looked after children, children in kinship care, and children who have, or have had, a social worker. As these responsibilities are extended through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, we will work closely with the VSH to support:

- **Children in kinship care** – promoting their attendance, engagement and achievement;
- **Children with a social worker** – including those who have ever had one – improving attendance and engagement and reducing the risk of exclusion.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Designated Teacher

At Cubitt Town Primary School, the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children is **Angie Drew, Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) and SENCo**. As a qualified teacher and senior leader, she is the central point of contact for LAC and PLAC. Her responsibilities include:

- **Advocacy and pupil voice:** championing the needs of LAC/PLAC and making sure the child's voice is represented in all meetings and target setting.
- **Staff development:** making sure all staff understand the needs of care-experienced children, with a focus on trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice.
- **High expectations:** promoting high aspirations and challenging negative stereotypes.
- **Personal Education Plans:** leading the school's contribution to each child's PEP and working with social workers and the Virtual School to put targets in place and monitor them.
- **Intervention:** coordinating tailored support, prioritising LAC/PLAC for tutoring and interventions, and using assessment to target support.
- **Transitions:** making sure children settle well on joining the school, and that records move quickly and securely when they leave.
- **Monitoring:** keeping close oversight of each child's progress, attendance and wellbeing, and acting early when concerns arise.
- **Funding:** managing Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) for LAC (through the Virtual School) and PLAC.
- **Reporting:** providing an annual, anonymised report to the Governing Body.
- **Multi-agency working:** acting as the main link with the Virtual School, social workers, carers and adoptive parents.
- **Pastoral support:** securing support from our learning mentors, ELSA and pastoral team, and working with our Mental Health Lead.
- **Avoiding exclusion:** calling an urgent multi-agency meeting for any child at risk of suspension or exclusion.

Class teachers are told when a looked after or previously looked after child is in their class, and are supported to understand the child's needs and plan for them.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body appoints a **Link Governor for Looked After Children** Margaret Davies who will:

- make sure the school has an appropriately trained Designated Teacher with the time, resources and authority to fulfil the role;
- review the Designated Teacher's annual, anonymised report on the attainment, progress, attendance and exclusions of LAC and PLAC;
- monitor how Pupil Premium Plus is used and its impact;
- support the local authority's duty to promote the education of children in care; and
- work with senior leaders to make sure all staff understand how to support care-experienced children.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads

Our DSLs – **Robyn Bruce, Karen Ward and Jacqui Jenkins** – work closely with the Designated Teacher to:

- identify any safeguarding concerns and overlapping harms, such as online harm alongside family difficulties;
- monitor attendance as a safeguarding indicator, recognising patterns of absence or of children going missing;
- make sure our filtering and monitoring arrangements protect care-experienced children, who may be at higher risk of online exploitation or prejudice-based harm; and
- share safeguarding information promptly with social workers and the Virtual School.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Every looked after child must have a PEP as part of their care plan. The PEP is a living document, completed through the Tower Hamlets ePEP system At Cubitt Town, PEPs:

- **reflect the child's voice** – their views on their learning, strengths, worries and aspirations;
- **link wellbeing and learning** – explicitly connecting emotional wellbeing to learning targets;
- **use PP+ purposefully** – linking any funding requests to specific learning or social and emotional targets;
- are **reviewed termly**, with the child (where appropriate), the Designated Teacher, the social worker and carers;
- contain **SMART targets** (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) covering both academic and social and emotional development.

For previously looked after children, we will offer parents and guardians the chance to agree a plan for their child's support, if they wish.

6. Pupil Premium Plus

Looked after and previously looked after children face particular barriers to learning, and Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is used to help them overcome these.

- **Looked After Children:** PP+ is managed by the Tower Hamlets Virtual School Head and is not automatically passed to the school. The Designated Teacher links any requests to clear targets in the child's termly ePEP. Funding is agreed at the Virtual School's discretion.
- **Previously Looked After Children:** PP+ is paid directly to the school, based on the school census, where parents or guardians have told the school of the child's status. We consult parents and guardians on how it is used to meet their child's needs – for example, attachment, trauma-related or learning needs.

- **Kinship care:** children in informal kinship arrangements do not attract PP+, but they are identified and supported through our wider support for vulnerable learners.

7. Safeguarding and Family Help

- **The Family Help pathway:** the DSLs and Designated Teacher work closely with Tower Hamlets Children's Social Care so that support continues smoothly when a child moves from Family Help into care, or leaves care through adoption or a special guardianship order.
- **Looking beyond the school gates:** safeguarding planning for care-experienced children considers placement stability, anxieties about family contact, and risks in the community.
- **Trauma-informed responses:** trauma can show itself through dysregulated behaviour or difficulty communicating. Our safeguarding and behaviour responses always seek to understand the cause before considering any sanction.
- **First-day absence:** any absence of a looked after child is followed up on the first day, and the social worker and Virtual School are informed, in line with Tower Hamlets expectations.

8. Behaviour and inclusion

In line with our Behaviour Regulation Policy, we recognise that **behaviour is communication**.

- Our relational, trauma-informed approach – including the Zones of Regulation and the Cubitt Town Peace Path – is adapted for each child to avoid known triggers, and prioritises restorative approaches over punitive ones.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for care-experienced children, and staff are trained in attachment-aware practice.
- **Suspension and permanent exclusion are an absolute last resort.** Before any suspension of a looked after child is considered, the Designated Teacher will consult the Virtual School Head and the child's social worker to explore alternative support.

9. Alternative provision

If a looked after child needs an alternative or off-site placement, the school keeps overall responsibility for their safeguarding and progress:

- the Designated Teacher, with the Virtual School, will review the placement at least **every half term**, checking its safety, suitability and the child's wellbeing and attendance;
- the placement will be recorded in the child's ePEP, showing how the provider is meeting the child's learning and emotional targets.

10. Transitions

Moving schools can be a time of high anxiety for care-experienced children.

- **Starting at Cubitt Town:** the Designated Teacher meets carers and the social worker, gathers information and assessments, and plans a supported start, including a key adult.
- **Moving to secondary school:** the Designated Teacher will meet the new school's Designated Teacher and share the latest PEP and any sensitive information about the child's history, needs and triggers, with enhanced transition visits where helpful.
- **In-year moves:** records, including the child protection file, are transferred securely within **5 school days**, in line with KCSIE 2026.

11. Working with the Virtual School

We maintain an active partnership with the Tower Hamlets Virtual School, including:

- sharing daily attendance and termly progress information through Welfare Call
- attending and contributing to termly PEP meetings;
- consulting the Virtual School Head before any suspension or exclusion of a looked after child; and
- taking part in Virtual School training and Designated Teacher networks.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

The Designated Teacher will give the Governing Body an annual, anonymised report, including:

- the number of LAC and PLAC on roll;
- attendance compared with the school average;
- progress and attainment;
- any suspensions or exclusions; and
- the use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus.

This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Positive Mental Health Policy, Behaviour Regulation Policy, SEND Policy and Attendance Policy. It will be reviewed annually.

13. Our staff commitment

> "I understand that for a child in care, school is often the only constant in a world of change. I commit to being a stable, predictable and empathetic adult in their life, prioritising their emotional safety as the foundation for their learning and success."