



"...Think MORE; be a Westmorland Warrior"

Child in Care and previously in care policy

Westmorland Primary School

September 2024

Review Autumn 2026

Signed: Headteacher



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Definition

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 .The Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Looked after children are those in care and are either –

- Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order, living either at home or away from home. The Local Authority has parental authority which it then shares with the parents in a prescribed way.
- Accommodated with friends or relatives, in foster care or in residential homes – parents retain full parental responsibility.
- Remanded into care.

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person*, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and

A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

*This duty does not apply to Child Arrangement Orders which only govern where a child is to spend time and/or contact.

In line with local policy regarding preferred language use, hereafter 'looked after children' are referred to within this policy as 'Children in Our Care' and 'previously looked after children' are referred to as 'Children Previously in Our Care'.

Aims

The school is committed to the concept of the corporate parent for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care and will work tirelessly to support them to:

- Offer stability, safety, continuity, positive experiences and individual care and attention
- Develop an attachment aware school and embed strategies to support the impact of trauma on emotional and mental health
- Enable all children to make good progress in learning

The school will take account of the Department for Education (DFE) statutory guidance: 'The Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children' February 2018.

Rationale

- Nationally, the education outcomes at all stages, for Children in our Care and Children Previously in our Care are of concern with a significant gap compared with outcomes for their peers who are not Children in our Care or Children Previously in our Care.
- It follows that children and young people in our care, or previously in our care require additional support and positive discrimination in their favour if this situation is to be improved.



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The role of the governing body

The Governors will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance. The governing body of Westmorland Primary School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises the need to champion performance, for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care and is committed to improving outcomes for them.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care are supported as fully as possible. They will ensure that the following are in place, and effective:

- A Designated Governor for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care
- A Designated Teacher for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care who is a qualified teacher having completed the appropriate induction period, with appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others.
- Designated Teacher access to training opportunities and information specific to factors that impact on the attainment of Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care (Virtual School Headteachers agree as a minimum, DTs should have two days a year training)
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children in Our Care
- All staff in school have a clear understanding of the issues that affect Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality
- Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care are a priority group for admission to the school
- Policies will reflect Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care’s needs

The Governing body will hold the school to account on how it supports its Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care, including:

- How the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) is used
- The level of pupil progress

The role of the headteacher and leadership team

The Headteacher and Leadership Team of Westmorland Primary School will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance. They will:

- Provide an anonymised annual report on the provision for, and progress of, Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care, to the Governing body.
- Ensure staff are aware that the provision to support Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care is a key school priority.
- Give the Designated Teacher for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care, the time and facilities to carry out their job description and to support them at all times in their work
- Ensure the voice of Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs.
- Ensure PPP is allocated and used for the benefit of Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care to support progress, attainment, engagement and well-being.
- Provide continuing professional development for staff on issues pertaining to Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care, such as attachment and trauma.
- Work in partnership with the Virtual School, Children’s Social Care and other relevant services to share information and promote progress and achievement.



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The role of the designated teacher

The Designated Teacher will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance.

The Designated Teacher is the central point of initial contact within Westmorland Primary School for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care. They ensure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

The Designated Teacher will take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. Our school will make sure that **all staff**:

- Have high expectations of children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour.
- Understand how important it is to see children as individuals, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their legal status.
- Appreciate the central importance of the PEP for Children in Our Care in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported.
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.
- For Children Previously in Our Care, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

The Designated Teacher will have a direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care. They will:

- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures and ensure policies are effective in reflecting their needs.
- Ensure PPP is used effectively within school to have the greatest positive impact on children's learning. This includes:
 - For Children in Our Care – discussing, recording use of and evidencing impact of PPP in the PEP using SMART targets
 - For Children Previously in Our Care - ensuring parents and guardians of Children Previously in Our Care are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PPP, and to be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care are prioritised for support; listened to; encouraged to participate; and believe they can achieve through an ethos of aspiration.
- Attend PEP meetings and make a record of discussions and decisions so that each child has access to the support they need to achieve. These meetings will take place a minimum of once per term, in order to review support and deploy effective resources.
- The Designated Teacher will closely monitor school attendance and suspensions for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care. When a Child in Our Care is at risk of either a fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher - working with the VSH,



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social care and the child’s carers - will be asked to consider what additional assessment and support is needed to address the cause of the child’s behaviour and prevent the need for suspension. When a child leaves care, their past experiences may continue to impact on their behaviour. As with Children in Our Care, the school should look to support a Child Previously in Our Care to improve their behaviour to avoid exclusion becoming necessary.

You may want to cite schools’ inclusion policy with reference to statutory guidance on suspensions, including a statement around working towards not issuing permanent exclusions for Children in Our Care and Children Previously in Our Care.

Signed by the Chair of Governors:
Dated: 2/12/2024
The name of our appointed Designated Governor is: Jacquie Shaw
The name of our school’s Designated Teacher is: Karla George
This policy is to be next reviewed on: September 2026