

Thames View Junior School

Mr James Smith – Executive Headteacher
Mrs Sandy Sanghera – Head of School
Miss Chloe Woodington – Deputy Headteacher
Mr James Hall – AHT & Inclusion Lead



Looked After Children Policy

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Updated by J. Smith / J. Hall



Office@Thamesviewjunior.com
02045119240
www.ThamesViewJunior.com

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Promoting Inclusion, Achievement and Well-being for Children in Care

Thames View Junior School

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1. Introduction

Thames View Junior School recognises that children who are looked after by the local authority, and those who were previously looked after, may have experienced significant challenges, including separation from birth families, trauma, loss, instability and changes in care arrangements. These experiences can have an impact on a child's emotional well-being, relationships, confidence, behaviour and educational outcomes.

Nationally, children who are looked after (LAC) often face additional barriers to achievement compared with their peers and may be at increased risk of lower

attainment, absence and exclusion. Schools have a vital role in ensuring that these children receive the support, encouragement and opportunities they need to thrive.

At Thames View Junior School, we are committed to ensuring that every looked after child and previously looked after child receives high-quality education, appropriate support and equal access to all aspects of school life.

We are committed to:

- Providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued and respected.
- Promoting high aspirations and positive educational outcomes.
- Supporting children's emotional health, resilience and sense of belonging.
- Ensuring the voice of the child is central to decisions affecting their education and well-being.
- Working collaboratively with parents, carers, social workers, the Virtual School and other professionals.

We recognise that children's individual experiences and needs are unique. Our approach is therefore child-centred, trauma-informed and based on building positive relationships.

2. Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC)

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority under the Children Act 1989.

This includes children who are:

- Accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 through voluntary agreement with parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Subject to a Care Order under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989.
- Subject to an Interim Care Order under Section 38 of the Children Act 1989.
- Subject to an Emergency Protection Order under Sections 44 or 46 of the Children Act 1989.
- Remanded or detained under provisions of the Children and Young Persons Act 1969.

Children may live in a range of placements, including:

- Foster care.
- Residential children's homes.
- Kinship care arrangements.

- Other approved placements.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

A previously looked after child is a child who is no longer looked after by a local authority because they have:

- Been adopted.
- Left care through a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).
- Left care through a Child Arrangements Order (CAO).

This includes children adopted from state care outside England and Wales where eligibility requirements are met.

Parents or carers may be required to provide supporting evidence to confirm eligibility for specific support, including Pupil Premium Plus funding.

3. Policy Statement

Thames View Junior School is committed to improving educational outcomes and life opportunities for looked after children and previously looked after children.

We understand that educational achievement can have a significant impact on children's future opportunities, independence and well-being. We therefore ensure that LAC and PLAC are provided with the support, challenge and encouragement required to achieve their potential.

We will ensure that:

- Every child is treated as an individual and supported according to their needs.
- Barriers to learning are identified early and appropriate support is provided.
- Children have access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.
- Staff understand the potential impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences.
- Children are supported to develop positive relationships and a strong sense of belonging.
- Decisions are informed by the child's views and aspirations.

4. Aims

At Thames View Junior School, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, stable and supportive environment for all LAC and PLAC.
- Promote equality of opportunity and remove barriers to achievement.
- Ensure children develop confidence, resilience and independence.
- Raise aspirations and support children to achieve their academic potential.
- Monitor progress, attendance, behaviour and well-being effectively.
- Ensure access to enrichment opportunities, clubs, trips and wider school experiences.
- Provide appropriate pastoral support and early intervention where required.
- Work closely with carers, families, social workers, the Virtual School and other agencies.
- Ensure that children's views are actively sought, valued and reflected in planning.
- Use Pupil Premium Plus funding effectively to improve outcomes.

5. Statutory Framework and Guidance

This policy has been developed with reference to the following legislation and guidance:

- **Children Act 1989**
- **Children Act 2004**
- **Children and Young Persons Act 2008**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**
- **Education Act 1996**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
- **Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (Department for Education statutory guidance)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children**

The school will ensure that statutory responsibilities relating to looked after and previously looked after children are fully implemented.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that Thames View Junior School fulfils its statutory duties towards looked after children and previously looked after children.

The Governing Body will:

- Appoint a named governor with responsibility for overseeing provision for LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has sufficient time, training and support to fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- Monitor the progress, attainment, attendance, behaviour and well-being of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that school leaders are held accountable for improving outcomes for these pupils.
- Receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher regarding provision and outcomes for LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that information relating to individual children remains confidential and is shared appropriately.
- Ensure that relevant school policies consider the needs of LAC and PLAC.

The Governing Body will not receive information that identifies individual children unless this is necessary to fulfil their safeguarding or statutory responsibilities.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the school meets its statutory duties towards looked after and previously looked after children.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has the appropriate authority and resources to carry out their role effectively.
- Promote a whole-school culture that recognises and responds to the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate training and guidance.
- Monitor the effectiveness of support provided to LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed and that children's welfare remains central to decision-making.
- Ensure that the school works effectively with external agencies and professionals.

The Designated Teacher (DT)

The Designated Teacher is a statutory role and must be a qualified teacher with appropriate seniority, experience and authority within the school.

At Thames View Junior School, the Designated Teacher acts as the key advocate for looked after and previously looked after children and ensures that their educational needs remain a priority.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Champion the educational needs and interests of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that all relevant staff understand the needs of LAC and PLAC and the potential impact of previous experiences.
- Maintain accurate and confidential records relating to LAC and PLAC.
- Monitor academic progress, attendance, behaviour and emotional well-being.
- Ensure that appropriate interventions and support are identified and implemented.
- Coordinate and review Personal Education Plans (PEPs) regularly.
- Ensure that the child's voice is included within educational planning.
- Liaise with the Virtual School Head, social workers, carers, parents and other professionals.
- Support effective transitions, including changes of class, school or educational phase.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used effectively and that impact is evaluated.
- Provide advice and guidance to staff regarding attachment, trauma-informed approaches and inclusive practice.
- Report annually to governors on provision and outcomes for LAC and PLAC.

All Staff

All staff at Thames View Junior School have a responsibility to support and promote the educational and emotional well-being of looked after and previously looked after children.

Staff will:

- Develop positive, trusting relationships with children.
- Recognise that behaviour may be a form of communication and may reflect previous experiences.
- Use consistent, supportive and nurturing approaches.
- Maintain high expectations for achievement and behaviour.
- Provide appropriate encouragement, challenge and support.
- Follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns promptly.
- Respect confidentiality and share information appropriately.
- Celebrate children's strengths, achievements and successes.

7. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a statutory part of the care planning process and provides a structured approach to supporting the education of looked after children.

At Thames View Junior School, the PEP is viewed as a working document that identifies strengths, needs, aspirations and actions to support the child's progress.

The PEP will:

- Be completed in partnership with the child, school, carer, social worker and Virtual School where appropriate.
- Be reviewed at least termly, or more frequently where required.
- Ensure that the child's views, wishes and aspirations are recorded and acted upon.
- Identify academic, emotional, social and pastoral needs.
- Include clear actions, responsibilities and timescales.
- Be linked to wider support plans where appropriate.
- Identify how Pupil Premium Plus funding may be used to support improved outcomes.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that PEP meetings are purposeful and focused on improving outcomes rather than simply recording information.

8. Supporting the Needs of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Thames View Junior School recognises that children who are looked after or previously looked after may have experienced disruption, trauma, loss or uncertainty. These experiences may influence their learning, relationships, emotional regulation and behaviour.

We will provide support that is:

- Relationship-based.
- Trauma-informed.
- Consistent and predictable.
- Inclusive and aspirational.

Support may include:

- Regular check-ins with a trusted adult.
- Pastoral support and mentoring.
- Emotional literacy and self-regulation support.
- Targeted academic interventions.
- Support with friendships and social relationships.
- Access to enrichment activities and wider opportunities.
- Adaptations to support individual needs.
- Additional transition support when required.

Where appropriate, the school will work with external professionals to provide specialist support.

We will ensure that LAC and PLAC:

- Are encouraged to participate fully in school life.
- Have access to clubs, trips, leadership opportunities and enrichment activities.
- Are supported to develop confidence, independence and resilience.
- Have their achievements recognised and celebrated.

9. Partnership Working

Effective partnership working is essential in supporting looked after and previously looked after children.

Thames View Junior School will work collaboratively with:

- The Virtual School Head and Virtual School team.
- Social workers.
- Foster carers.
- Adoptive parents.
- Special Guardians.
- Parents and families where appropriate.
- Health professionals.
- Educational psychologists and other specialist services.

We will:

- Share information appropriately and lawfully.
- Attend relevant meetings and reviews.
- Contribute effectively to care planning processes.
- Respond promptly to requests for information.
- Work together to remove barriers to education.
- Ensure that decisions are centred around the needs and views of the child.

Information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding procedures, confidentiality requirements and UK GDPR.

10. Supporting Transitions

Transitions can be particularly significant for looked after and previously looked after children. Thames View Junior School will ensure that transitions are carefully planned and supported.

This includes:

- Transition into school.
- Transition between year groups.
- Changes in placement or care arrangements.
- Transition to secondary school.

Support may include:

- Additional visits.
- Transition meetings with key adults.
- Sharing relevant information with receiving schools.
- Identifying trusted adults and sources of support.
- Preparing children emotionally and practically for change.

The child's views will always be considered when planning transitions.

11. Use of Pupil Premium Plus Funding

Looked after children receive Pupil Premium Plus funding through the local authority. The funding is intended to improve educational outcomes and address barriers to achievement.

At Thames View Junior School, funding will be used strategically to support identified needs and priorities.

This may include:

- Targeted academic interventions.
- Pastoral and emotional well-being support.
- Mentoring.
- Enrichment opportunities.
- Resources that support learning and confidence.
- Specialist programmes where appropriate.

The Designated Teacher will monitor the impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding and ensure that spending decisions are evidence-informed and linked to the child's needs.

12. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Thames View Junior School recognises that looked after and previously looked after children may have experienced vulnerability or safeguarding concerns.

All staff must:

- Follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Report concerns immediately using the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Understand that information regarding children's care status is confidential.
- Share information only with those who need it to support the child.

The school will ensure that children's privacy is respected while ensuring that appropriate professionals have access to relevant information.

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of provision for looked after and previously looked after children will be monitored regularly.

The Designated Teacher will evaluate:

- Academic progress and attainment.
- Attendance.
- Behaviour and exclusions.
- Emotional well-being.
- Participation in wider school opportunities.
- Impact of interventions.
- Use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding.
- Staff training and awareness.

An annual report will be provided to governors outlining:

- The number of LAC and PLAC on roll.
- Progress and attainment information.
- Attendance and behaviour information.
- Support provided.
- Impact of interventions.
- Identified priorities for improvement.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body to ensure it remains effective, current and compliant with statutory guidance.

14. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Mental Health and Well-being Policy
- Relationships and Health Education Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy

15. Complaints

Thames View Junior School is committed to working collaboratively with children, carers, parents and professionals to ensure that looked after and previously looked after children receive effective support.

If a concern or complaint arises regarding provision for a looked after or previously looked after child, this should be raised through the school's Complaints Policy.

The school will seek to resolve concerns promptly, fairly and sensitively, ensuring that the child's best interests remain central throughout the process.