WIMBLEDON CHASE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Transforming lives through education, aspiration and inspiration

Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After Policy

October 2026

At Wimbledon Chase Primary School, the child is at the heart of all our decision-making. We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which every child feels valued, respected and confident to express their views, feelings and concerns. Through our whole-school and classroom systems, we provide opportunities for children to share their worries in a safe, sensitive and confidential manner. All staff understand the importance of listening carefully, responding with empathy and taking every child's concerns seriously. We strive to ensure that every child knows their voice matters, that they will be treated with dignity and respect, and that appropriate action will be taken to support their wellbeing and keep them safe.

This policy has been developed by the Governing Body and staff of Wimbledon Chase Primary School with due regard to the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities* (2018). The policy also reflects relevant legislation, current statutory guidance and local authority procedures to ensure that Children Looked After and

Previously Looked-After Children receive appropriate support to promote their educational achievement, wellbeing and personal development.

Designated Teacher: Louise Crane
Designated Governor: Nicola Fleming

1. Introduction and legal framework

Wimbledon Chase Primary School is committed to promoting the educational achievement, wellbeing, inclusion and life chances of Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC).

This policy sets out the school's arrangements for identifying, supporting and monitoring these pupils and for working effectively with parents, carers, local authorities, Virtual School Heads and other relevant professionals.

The policy has been developed with regard to the legislation and guidance applicable in England, including:

- Children Act 1989.
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008, including the statutory provisions relating to designated teachers.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation.
- Department for Education (DfE), *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities* (February 2018).
- DfE, *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities* (February 2018).
- DfE, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, and subsequent editions as they come into force.
- DfE School Admissions Code and applicable admissions legislation.
- Current DfE pupil premium conditions of grant and guidance.
- Relevant procedures and guidance issued by the London Borough of Merton, Merton Virtual School and the responsible local authority for children looked after by another authority.

The school will comply with the statutory duties applicable to maintained schools and will follow current statutory guidance and relevant local procedures.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance or local arrangements make this necessary.

2. Definitions

2.1 Children Looked After (CLA)

A looked-after child is a child who is looked after by a local authority within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989.

This includes children who:

- Are subject to a care order or interim care order.
- Are accommodated by a local authority under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- Live with foster carers, relatives, in residential care or in other arrangements while retaining their legal looked-after status.

A child's looked-after status is determined by their legal circumstances and not solely by their living arrangements. The school will seek clarification from the responsible local authority where necessary.

2.2 Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)

For the purposes of this policy, previously looked-after children are children who are no longer looked after by a local authority in England or Wales because they became subject to:

- An adoption order.
- A special guardianship order.
- A child arrangements order specifying with whom the child is to live.

The definition also covers children who appear to the governing body to have been in state care outside England and Wales immediately before being adopted.

Eligibility for particular funding arrangements will be determined in accordance with the relevant DfE guidance and conditions of grant.

The school recognises that children may continue to have educational, emotional, social or developmental needs associated with their earlier experiences. Support will be based on each child's circumstances, needs, strengths and views.

Where information is needed to establish funding eligibility, the school will explain the applicable requirements to parents or guardians and request appropriate supporting information. Such information will be handled securely and confidentially.

3. Aims and principles

The overarching aim of this policy is to ensure that CLA and PLAC at Wimbledon Chase Primary School receive appropriate support to achieve their full educational potential.

The school will:

- Promote high expectations for attainment, progress, attendance, participation and behaviour.
- Provide an inclusive environment in which pupils are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Identify and address barriers to learning as early as possible.
- Listen to pupils' views and take account of their wishes, feelings, strengths and aspirations.
- Promote educational stability and continuity, particularly during changes in care arrangements, placement or school.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, social workers, Virtual School Heads and other relevant professionals.
- Protect pupils' privacy and share information only where lawful, necessary and proportionate.
- Avoid assumptions about a child's needs, behaviour, family circumstances or abilities based on care experience.
- Monitor the effectiveness of support and make changes where progress or wellbeing indicates that further action is needed.

4. Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that a qualified teacher is appointed as Designated Teacher in accordance with the statutory requirements applicable to maintained schools.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has sufficient authority, time, resources, training and support to fulfil the role.
- Appoint a named governor to liaise with the Designated Teacher and oversee the implementation of this policy.
- Receive an annual report on the educational progress, attendance, wellbeing and support arrangements for CLA and PLAC.
- Ensure that reports protect confidentiality and do not disclose identifying details unnecessarily.
- Consider the attainment and progress of care-experienced pupils in comparison with their peers, where meaningful and appropriate.
- Monitor the effectiveness of provision and the use of pupil premium funding through appropriate strategic oversight.
- Ensure that relevant school policies and procedures take account of the needs of CLA and PLAC.
- Review this policy at least annually and ensure that it remains consistent with current statutory guidance.

The Governing Body will exercise its responsibilities strategically and will not seek unnecessary access to confidential information about individual pupils.

5. Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will act as the school's central point of contact for promoting the educational achievement and wellbeing of CLA and PLAC.

5.1 Monitoring progress and achievement

The Designated Teacher will:

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of CLA and PLAC on roll, with appropriate safeguards for confidential information.
- Promote high expectations and a culture of achievement across the school.
- Monitor pupils' attainment, progress, attendance, participation and wider educational needs.

- Identify barriers to learning and work with relevant staff and professionals to address them.
- Challenge underachievement and ensure that agreed interventions are reviewed for effectiveness.
- Ensure that pupils' strengths, interests, views and aspirations inform their educational support.
- Monitor the use and impact of pupil premium funding where relevant to their role.
- Promote educational stability and continuity during changes in placement, school or care status.
- Raise concerns about potential suspension or permanent exclusion with the Headteacher and relevant professionals at an early stage, so that appropriate support and alternatives can be considered.

5.2 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

For CLA, the Designated Teacher will:

- Work with the responsible local authority, social worker, Virtual School Head, carers and other relevant professionals to contribute to the preparation and review of the Personal Education Plan.
- Provide accurate and timely information about the child's attainment, progress, attendance, strengths and needs.
- Ensure that the PEP includes clear educational targets, agreed actions, responsible persons and arrangements for monitoring impact.
- Ensure that the child's views are gathered and considered in an age-appropriate and sensitive way.
- Monitor the delivery of agreed educational provision and raise concerns promptly if actions are delayed or progress is below expectations.
- Ensure that relevant information from an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or SEN Support arrangements is considered without unnecessary duplication.
- Support the secure and timely transfer of relevant educational records and PEP information when a pupil moves school.

The responsible local authority retains responsibility for its statutory care-planning duties. The Designated Teacher contributes to the educational element of that process.

5.3 Supporting staff

The Designated Teacher will:

- Advise teaching and support staff on the educational, emotional and social needs of CLA and PLAC.
- Help staff understand how experiences of care, loss, trauma, separation or changes in family circumstances may affect learning, attendance, relationships and behaviour.
- Promote appropriate teaching, pastoral support and positive behaviour strategies.
- Arrange or signpost relevant training where appropriate.
- Ensure that staff receive the information necessary to support individual pupils while limiting access to sensitive personal histories.
- Work with the Headteacher, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and senior leadership team to identify and address barriers to achievement.

5.4 Partnership working

The Designated Teacher will:

- Liaise with Merton Virtual School and the Virtual School Head, or the relevant Virtual School Head where the child is looked after by another local authority.
- Work constructively with social workers, carers, parents, guardians and other professionals as appropriate.
- Promote effective and sensitive home-school communication.
- Advocate for pupils' educational needs, rights, views and aspirations.
- Attend relevant training and professional networks.
- Support transitions between schools and changes in care status.

5.5 Confidentiality and safeguarding

The Designated Teacher will:

- Follow the school's safeguarding, child protection, data protection and information-sharing procedures.
- Ensure that information about a pupil's care status is shared only where there is a lawful basis and a legitimate professional need.

- Avoid unnecessary disclosure of a pupil's background in day-to-day school life.
- Refer safeguarding concerns promptly through the school's established Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) procedures.

6. Personal Education Plans

The PEP forms part of the care plan for a looked-after child. It supports the identification of educational needs, the setting of targets and the monitoring of progress.

The responsible local authority coordinates the care-planning process, including the PEP, in partnership with the school and relevant professionals.

6.1 Initiation and preparation

The school will work with the responsible local authority to ensure that:

- A PEP is initiated promptly when a child becomes looked after.
- Following an emergency placement, the responsible local authority initiates the PEP within the applicable statutory timeframe, including the requirement to initiate it within 10 working days where relevant.
- The initial PEP is prepared in time for the first statutory review of the child's care plan, in accordance with applicable guidance and local procedures.
- The child's educational needs, strengths, views and aspirations inform the plan.
- Targets, actions, responsible persons and arrangements for monitoring progress are clearly recorded.

The school will provide the educational information required by the responsible local authority promptly and will contribute actively to the PEP process.

6.2 Review arrangements

The school will follow the procedures and timetable of the responsible local authority.

For children looked after by Merton, the school will work with Merton Virtual School and use its current PEP arrangements, including the secure electronic system where applicable.

The school will:

- Provide assessment, attendance and progress information before PEP meetings.
- Ensure that the child's views are gathered and considered.
- Review progress against agreed targets and actions.
- Identify barriers to learning and agree appropriate support.
- Escalate concerns about unmet provision or delayed actions to the relevant professionals.
- Ensure that relevant EHCP information and annual review outcomes are considered.
- Update the PEP when circumstances change and support its secure transfer when the pupil moves school.

The frequency of PEP meetings will follow the responsible local authority's procedures and applicable statutory guidance. For children looked after by Merton, the school will follow the current Merton review timetable.

The school recognises that a PEP should be an active document that informs teaching, interventions and classroom support.

7. Responsibilities of other school staff

7.1 Class teachers and support staff

Class teachers and learning support assistants will:

- Maintain high expectations for pupils' academic, personal and social achievement.
- Monitor attendance, engagement, progress and wellbeing.
- Provide the Designated Teacher with accurate assessment information and updates for PEP preparation and reviews.
- Implement agreed classroom strategies and interventions.
- Raise concerns about underachievement, attendance, behaviour or emotional distress promptly.
- Seek advice from the Designated Teacher where teaching or support approaches may need to be adapted.
- Maintain confidentiality and share sensitive information only through appropriate channels.

7.2 Headteacher and senior leadership team

The Headteacher and senior leadership team will:

- Work with the Designated Teacher to monitor progress, attendance and wellbeing.
- Ensure that appropriate resources and staffing are allocated.
- Review emerging concerns relating to attendance, achievement, behaviour or educational stability.
- Consult the relevant Virtual School Head and other professionals at an early stage where a CLA or PLAC pupil is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, in accordance with applicable guidance.
- Promote a whole-school culture in which care-experienced pupils feel safe, included and supported.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate training.

7.3 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The SENCO will work with the Designated Teacher to:

- Identify and assess additional learning needs.
- Coordinate appropriate academic and pastoral interventions.
- Ensure that EHCP and SEN Support arrangements are appropriately considered alongside the pupil's PEP or other support arrangements.
- Promote joined-up planning and avoid unnecessary duplication.

7.4 All staff

All members of the school workforce will:

- Treat CLA and PLAC with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Recognise that experiences of care, loss or changes in family circumstances may affect pupils in different ways.
- Avoid making assumptions about a pupil's abilities, behaviour or needs based on their care history.
- Follow safeguarding, child protection, confidentiality and information-sharing procedures.
- Participate in relevant training where required.

8. Working with external agencies

The Designated Teacher and other relevant staff will work collaboratively with external agencies to support pupils' educational achievement and wellbeing.

This may include:

- Social workers and children's services.
- Merton Virtual School or the Virtual School Head of another responsible local authority.
- Foster carers, residential carers, special guardians and adoptive parents.
- Health professionals and other relevant support services.
- Professionals involved in care reviews, child protection conferences, child in need meetings and other multi-agency planning arrangements.

The school will provide accurate educational information and contribute to relevant meetings where appropriate.

Information will be shared lawfully, securely and proportionately, taking account of parental responsibility, court orders, safeguarding restrictions and the child's welfare.

The school will respond promptly to legitimate requests for educational information and transfer relevant records securely when a pupil moves school, in accordance with applicable requirements and local procedures.

Responsibility for the child's statutory care plan remains with the responsible local authority. The school is responsible for contributing to and delivering the educational provision agreed within its remit.

9. Pupil Premium Plus

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is intended to improve the educational outcomes of eligible CLA and PLAC. Funding arrangements differ according to the child's legal status and the applicable DfE conditions of grant.

For the 2026–27 financial year, the published DfE rate is £2,690 per eligible pupil.

9.1 Children Looked After

PP+ funding for CLA is allocated to the responsible local authority. The Virtual School Head oversees the use of this funding to improve the educational outcomes of children looked after by that authority.

The school will work with the responsible Virtual School Head and relevant professionals to identify educational priorities, agree appropriate support and monitor impact.

Funding may be allocated to the school or used for appropriate central or group provision in accordance with the applicable grant conditions and local authority arrangements.

The school will follow the relevant local authority's processes for requesting, recording and reporting the use of funding allocated to the pupil's educational provision.

9.2 Previously Looked-After Children

Eligible PLAC funding forms part of the school's pupil premium allocation, calculated in accordance with the relevant census information and DfE conditions of grant.

The school will encourage parents and guardians to inform the school where their child may be eligible. The school will explain the information required to establish eligibility and handle any supporting information confidentially.

The Designated Teacher will work with school leaders and, where appropriate, the Virtual School Head to ensure that the educational needs of PLAC inform the school's pupil premium strategy.

9.3 Funding principles

The school will:

- Use funding in accordance with the current DfE conditions of grant and menu of approaches.
- Select evidence-informed approaches that address identified barriers to learning and improve educational outcomes.
- Monitor the effectiveness of funded interventions.
- Keep appropriate records of expenditure and impact.
- Ensure that funding is not treated as an individual cash entitlement.
- Ensure that funding is not used to replace costs that the local authority or other responsible body is legally required to meet.
- Publish and update the school's pupil premium strategy statement in accordance with applicable requirements.

The school will consider the needs of individual pupils and the wider eligible cohort when deciding how funding can be used most effectively.

10. Children transferring out of care

A change in legal status does not necessarily mean that a child's educational, emotional or social needs have ended.

Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes previously looked after, the school will:

- Consider the child's continuing educational and pastoral needs.
- Maintain appropriate support and monitor progress.
- Work sensitively with parents or guardians.
- Review existing targets and support arrangements.
- Consider whether a non-statutory school support plan would help maintain continuity.
- Consult the Virtual School Head for advice where appropriate and available.

A statutory PEP is no longer required once a child ceases to be looked after. However, the school may maintain an appropriate internal plan where this would benefit the pupil.

Parents and guardians will be given clear information about relevant funding eligibility and the information needed for the school census. Support will be based on the child's needs and will not be made conditional on the provision of funding evidence.

The school will seek to maintain continuity of support and avoid unnecessary disruption during changes in care status.

11. Confidentiality and information sharing

The school will handle information about CLA and PLAC in accordance with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, safeguarding requirements and its own information governance procedures.

11.1 Need to know

Information about a pupil's care history, legal status and personal circumstances will be shared only where there is an appropriate lawful basis and a legitimate professional need.

11.2 Parental responsibility and communication

The school will take reasonable steps to establish who holds parental responsibility and will consider relevant court orders, contact arrangements and safeguarding restrictions when communicating with parents, carers and other professionals.

11.3 Protecting privacy

The school will avoid unnecessary disclosure of a pupil's care status to other pupils, parents or staff who do not need the information to carry out their responsibilities.

Where appropriate, the pupil's views and preferences about privacy will be considered in an age-appropriate way.

11.4 Secure records

Records relating to care status, PEPs and social care information will be stored in approved secure systems with access controls appropriate to the sensitivity of the information.

Information will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the school's records management and retention procedures.

11.5 Safeguarding

Nothing in this policy prevents or delays necessary and lawful information sharing to safeguard a child, prevent harm or protect their welfare.

Staff must follow the school's safeguarding and information-sharing procedures and seek advice from the DSL where required.

12. Admissions, attendance, behaviour and inclusion

The school will ensure that the needs of CLA and PLAC are considered in the implementation of its wider policies and procedures.

This includes:

- Applying the statutory admissions arrangements and priority provisions relevant to looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promoting regular attendance and responding promptly to attendance concerns.

- Applying behaviour policies fairly and consistently, taking account of individual circumstances and any agreed support.
- Identifying and addressing bullying, discrimination or exclusion from school life.
- Working with the SENCO and other professionals where additional learning needs are identified.
- Supporting transitions between classes, key stages and schools.

Care status alone will not determine a pupil's needs or the support provided. Decisions will be based on the child's circumstances, individual needs and applicable statutory requirements.

13. Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's current:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Admissions Policy.
- SEND Policy.
- Attendance Policy.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Data Protection and Information Sharing procedures.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Records Management and Retention procedures.

Relevant statutory publications include:

- Children Act 1989.
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- DfE, *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities*.
- DfE, *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children*.
- DfE, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, current applicable edition.

- DfE School Admissions Code, current applicable edition.
- DfE pupil premium conditions of grant and guidance for the relevant financial year.
- Current guidance and procedures issued by Merton Virtual School and other responsible local authorities where applicable.

14. Policy review and approval

The Governing Body will review this policy at least annually and sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, funding arrangements or local authority procedures make this necessary.

The Designated Teacher will support the review by considering anonymised information about educational progress, attendance, wellbeing, the effectiveness of support and any changes needed to school practice.

Designated Teacher: Louise Crane

Designated Governor: Nicola Fleming

Date approved: October 2026, subject to formal approval by the Governing Body

Approved by: Governing Body

Date of next review: October 2027