



*Inspire Learning, Ignite Curiosity*

## **Marlow Church of England Infant School Looked after Children Policy 2025**

***Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness”***

***Genesis 1:26***

### **Rationale**

At Marlow Church of England Infant School our curriculum vision is to inspire learning and ignite curiosity within a welcoming Christian and spiritual community. We embrace the uniqueness of everybody and are inclusive of all. Our values of respect, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, thankfulness and service guide all that we do and our aim is for every child to feel nurtured, supported and safe.

Our belief is that every individual is created in God’s image and therefore is precious and valuable. We believe in treating everybody with respect and dignity because we acknowledge everyone’s God given value and unique identity

We aim to achieve this by providing children with the opportunity to work towards achieving their full potential by:

- Embracing the uniqueness of everybody and be inclusive of all
- Empowering all to be enthusiastic learners
- Ensuring that every child feels nurtured, supported and safe
- Enriching learning through progressive teaching methods and technology
- Being responsible to and for society
- Being good citizens of the planet

As a school we support the rights of children and these rights are encompassed in UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This policy focuses on helping to realise Article 28 *All children have the right to a quality education.*

### **Aims**

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and potential and ability of all children is promoted.
- To bring the educational achievements of our Looked After Children nearer to those of their peers.
- To recognise our role as a corporate parent to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children.
- To ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After Children are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
- To ensure that pupils are involved, where possible, in decisions affecting their future provision.
- To ensure that Looked After Children take as full a part as possible in all school activities

### **Rationale**

Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Looked After Children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement with these children when compared to their peers.

As a result, as the children have progressed through their academic life, they have experienced poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Looked After Children progressing to Higher Education, following progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

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 behaviour issues
- poor attachments to others
- have a need to be very private.

Marlow C of E Infant School is 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
- Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

### **The Virtual School**

The Virtual School for Children in Care is a statutory service provided by the Local Authority with the main aim of improving the educational outcomes of children in care. It is a small, joint agency, countywide team of specialist staff from education and social care set up in 2001 to improve the educational achievement and experience of Buckinghamshire's children in care. They provide support and challenge to schools, social workers and foster carers to ensure that everyone is working towards this aim. Marlow C of E Infant School will invite staff from the Virtual School to PEP meetings and will ask them to signpost to other services which may be able to support the LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN. The Virtual School hold the Pupil Premium Plus funding for all children in care in Buckinghamshire and ensure that this is spent based on individual need in order to close the gap. Marlow C of E Infant School will always be aspirational in our expectations for these children so that the Pupil Premium Plus funding can be used in the most effective manner to raise their progress and attainment.

### **Responsibility of the Headteacher**

- Identify a designated teacher for LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN, whose role is set out below. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated teacher not be available to undertake these legal duties.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admissions progress, attendance, exclusions and attainment of LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related policies.

### **Responsibility of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body will:

- Identify a Nominated Governor for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher;
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children;
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs of all its Looked After Children regardless of the originating authority;
- With the Headteacher, ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children;
- Review annually the effective implementation of the policy for Looked After Children
- The Nominated Governor for Looked After Children, will, wherever possible, provide support to the child on a regular basis – in reading, for example. This support will link to the child's Personal Education Plan and be planned for by the class teacher.

### **Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer. Note will be made of any specific requirements, including care status.
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months; a flow chart showing the PEP completion is found at the end of this policy.
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child (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);

Maintain a register / database of all Looked After Children, to include:

- the name of the social worker, area office and contact details
- status i.e. care order or accommodated
- type of placement i.e. residential, foster, respite
- daily contact information e.g. name of carer / parent / key worker in residential home
- ensure that the status of Looked After Children is identified within the school's management information system to track academic and other progress and target support appropriately;
- prepare reports for Governor's meetings to include:
  - the number of Looked After Children on role and confirmation that they have a PEP
  - their attendance compared to other pupils
  - their attainment (SATs and teacher assessments compared to other pupils)
  - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
  - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as the needs of Looked After Children;
- 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, where feasible;
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded;

### **Roles and Responsibilities of all Staff**

- ensure that any child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child'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, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children;
- positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children

### **Allocation of Resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for Looked After Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and within our Pupil Premium Policy.

We will work with the Buckinghamshire Virtual School and Virtual Schools for students from other Local Authorities, to ensure that Looked After Children receive the full support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

### **Confidentiality**

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

### **Training**

The Headteacher/Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

The Governing Body will ensure staff receive appropriate training to fully undertake their roles with relation to LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN, allocating resources and time.

### **Roles in Marlow C of E Infant School**

The Designated Teacher:

Mrs S Reynolds, Headteacher

The Nominated Governor for Looked After Children:

Mrs J White

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time in line with the school cycle unless circumstances change.

Date Reviewed: March 2025

Review Date: March 2028