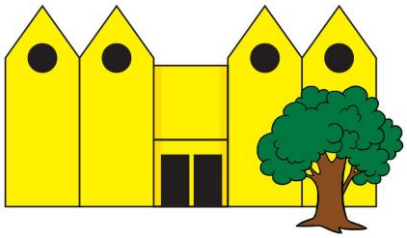
West Oxford Community Primary School



Children We Care For Policy

Approved by: FGB	**Date:** Nov 2026
Last Review on: Oct 2026	
Next Review due by: Oct 2028	

1. Introduction and aims

At West Oxford Community Primary School, every child is supported, challenged and valued. We recognise that children who are looked after, or who were previously looked after, may have experienced disruption, loss, trauma or uncertainty. These experiences can affect wellbeing, relationships, attendance and learning, but they do not define a child or determine what they can achieve.

We are committed to ensuring that these children feel safe, included and listened to, and have the same high aspirations and opportunities as their peers. We work in partnership with children, parents and carers, social workers, the local authority Virtual School and other professionals to understand each child's strengths and needs and to remove barriers to success.

This policy explains how West Oxford Community Primary School supports children we care for and sets out the responsibilities of leaders, governors and staff.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, a **looked-after child** is a child who is looked after by a local authority within the meaning of the Children Act 1989. This includes children accommodated under section 20 and children who are subject to a care order.

A **previously looked-after child** is a child who is no longer looked after because they became subject to an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order, or who was adopted from state care outside England.

The term *Children We Care For* is used throughout this policy alongside the statutory terms *looked-after children* and *previously looked-after children*. We use respectful, child-centred language and follow the child's and family's preferences wherever possible.

3. Our commitment

West Oxford Community Primary School recognises that children we care for may experience additional barriers to learning, wellbeing and inclusion. We are committed to ensuring that every child can reach their potential academically, socially and emotionally.

We will:

- Maintain high expectations for learning, achievement, behaviour and personal development.
- Provide a welcoming, supportive and inclusive school experience, including careful planning for admission, transitions and changes in circumstances.
- Listen to the child's wishes and feelings and involve them in decisions in an age-appropriate way.
- Identify barriers to attendance, participation, learning and wellbeing early and agree appropriate support.

- Promote positive relationships, emotional wellbeing, belonging and resilience.
- Ensure children can access trips, clubs, enrichment, equipment and wider school opportunities without avoidable disadvantage.
- Challenge bullying, discrimination, stigma and low expectations.
- Work collaboratively with parents and carers, social workers, the Virtual School and other relevant professionals.
- Share information lawfully, sensitively and only with those who need it to support the child or keep them safe.
- Work closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) where a child has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Governing body

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the school has an appropriately trained Designated Teacher and that they have the time, authority and support needed to carry out the role.
- Maintain oversight of the school's provision and outcomes for children we care for, while protecting individual pupils' confidentiality.
- Ensure that school policies and procedures support the needs of these children.
- Support the Headteacher and Designated Teacher in ensuring that appropriate provision and resources are in place.
- Receive an anonymised report at least annually, where numbers and circumstances allow, on the number of looked-after and previously looked-after children on roll, their attendance and educational progress, relevant exclusion information and the effectiveness of support.

Any reporting to governors will protect children's identities and will not identify individual pupils unnecessarily.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that a Designated Teacher is appointed and that suitable cover is in place during absence or following a change of post.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and have access to relevant training and advice.
- Ensure systems are in place to monitor admission, attendance, progress, wellbeing, behaviour and exclusions, and that concerns lead to timely action.
- Ensure support and resources are considered within school improvement and inclusion planning.
- Ensure the school works effectively with the Virtual School, social care, families and other agencies.

- Ensure that funding is used appropriately in line with current guidance and the school's responsibilities.

4.3 Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher is the main point of contact in school for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The role will be held by a member of staff with appropriate seniority, knowledge and training. The Designated Teacher for West Oxford Community Primary School is Tim Stead.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Build a positive relationship with each child and identify a trusted adult they can approach.
- Coordinate support and ensure the child's needs, strengths, views and aspirations inform planning.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed and reviewed for each looked-after child in partnership with the child, social worker, carer, Virtual School and relevant staff.
- Contribute to planning for previously looked-after children where appropriate, working with parents or guardians and consulting the Virtual School when useful.
- Monitor attendance, attainment, progress, participation and wellbeing, and arrange timely support where concerns arise.
- Liaise with the SENCO where a child has SEND or may need assessment or additional provision.
- Support staff to understand how a child's experiences may affect learning, relationships and behaviour, without making assumptions about the individual child.
- Promote participation in clubs, trips, enrichment and wider school life.
- Support smooth transitions into school, between classes and when moving to another setting or phase.
- Ensure information is transferred promptly and securely when a child changes school.
- Attend or contribute to relevant meetings and reviews, including PEP meetings and care planning meetings where appropriate.
- Ensure relevant funding is discussed and used appropriately to meet identified educational needs, working with the Virtual School for looked-after children.
- Raise concerns promptly with the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), social worker or other appropriate professional.

4.4 All staff

All staff will:

- Hold high expectations for children we care for and treat them with dignity, kindness and respect.
- Help children feel that they belong and can take part fully in school life.
- Follow agreed strategies and relevant plans, including the PEP and any pupil profile or SEND plan.

- Share relevant information with the Designated Teacher and DSL promptly and securely.
- Maintain confidentiality and avoid discussing a child's circumstances with people who do not need to know.
- Respond to safeguarding concerns in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Seek advice from the Designated Teacher when they are unsure how best to support a child.

5. Personal Education Plans and support

Every looked-after child must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) as part of their care planning. The school will contribute to the PEP and work with the child and relevant adults to ensure it is purposeful, current and focused on educational progress, wellbeing and the child's aspirations.

The PEP should identify the child's educational needs, strengths, targets, agreed support, responsible adults and review arrangements. The child's views should be included wherever possible.

Support may include:

- Adaptive teaching and targeted learning interventions.
- Pastoral support and opportunities to develop positive relationships.
- Support with attendance, organisation and engagement in learning.
- Access to clubs, trips, enrichment and other wider opportunities.
- Support with transitions and changes in personal circumstances.
- Additional strategies agreed with parents, carers and relevant professionals.

The school will review whether support is making a difference and adapt it when needed.

Previously looked-after children do not have a statutory PEP through the school in the same way as looked-after children. Their needs will be considered through the school's usual assessment, inclusion and pastoral systems, working in partnership with parents or guardians and other professionals as appropriate.

6. Funding

Pupil Premium Plus for looked-after children is managed by the relevant local authority Virtual School Head. The Designated Teacher will work with the Virtual School and other relevant adults to ensure that funding supports educational needs identified through the PEP and is linked to clear intended outcomes.

For eligible previously looked-after children, Pupil Premium Plus is included within the school's pupil premium allocation. The Designated Teacher will work with parents or guardians and school leaders to ensure that the needs of these children are considered in the school's pupil premium strategy.

Funding decisions will follow current Department for Education guidance and the school's published pupil premium strategy.

7. Attendance, behaviour and safeguarding

We recognise that personal circumstances may affect attendance, emotional regulation, relationships or behaviour. We will respond with curiosity, consistency and support, while maintaining clear and fair expectations for all pupils.

Any reasonable adjustments or individual strategies will be agreed with relevant staff and professionals and reviewed regularly.

Children we care for are entitled to the same safeguarding protection as every other pupil. Staff must follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, report concerns promptly and never assume that another professional has already acted.

Information about a child's care status must be shared only when necessary for their education, welfare or safety. Staff should take particular care to avoid inadvertently disclosing a child's circumstances to other pupils, parents or members of the school community.

8. SEND and inclusion

Some children we care for may also have special educational needs or disabilities. The Designated Teacher will work closely with the SENCO and relevant professionals to ensure that needs are identified and addressed.

Being looked after does not in itself mean that a child has SEND. Support will be based on the individual child's needs and the barriers they experience.

We will make reasonable adjustments where required and ensure children have access to the curriculum, relationships and opportunities that enable them to participate and achieve.

Our approach reflects West Oxford Community Primary School's commitment to inclusion for all. We aim to ensure that every child feels a valued member of our school community and has the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and develop their potential.

9. Monitoring and reporting

The Designated Teacher and Headteacher will keep the provision and progress of children we care for under review.

Monitoring may include:

- Attendance and punctuality.
- Attainment and progress.
- Wellbeing and pastoral needs.
- Participation in school life and enrichment opportunities.

- Behaviour, bullying and exclusions.
- The implementation and impact of agreed support.
- The effectiveness of partnership working with families and other professionals.

The governing body will receive an anonymised report at least annually, where numbers and circumstances allow, on the provision and outcomes for children we care for. Reporting will protect children's identities and confidentiality.

Information gathered through monitoring will be used to identify strengths, address barriers and improve provision.

10. Links with other policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
- Equality Information and Objectives.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- Pupil Premium Strategy.

The policy is informed by the Children Act 1989, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 and current Department for Education statutory guidance on promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and the role of the Designated Teacher.

11. Review

The governing body will review this policy at least every two years, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or school practice changes.