



**Policy:** Looked After Children

**Policy reference no:** 012

**Date:** September 2025

**Person responsible for policy:** Stephen Dean, Chief Executive Officer

**Authorised by:** Board of Trustees

**Review date:** December 2026

This Policy applies to all schools within the Primary QuEST Multi-Academy Trust. Primary QuEST is a Church of England Trust which seeks to ensure all pupils flourish, together in a supportive and caring environment.

### **Flourishing together through LIFE**

At Primary QuEST Multi-Academy Trust we believe that all Looked after children should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Gloucestershire children. We as a community aim to be champions for Looked after children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development.

#### **Who are our Looked after children?**

The child or young person will either have been taken into Care by the Local Authority, or have been 'Accommodated' by the Local Authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most Looked after children will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative, or even be placed back at home, with their parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

#### **In Supporting Looked after children we will:**

- Create a whole Trust ethos in which all staff understand their role and accept their responsibility as a Corporate Parent.
- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Bring the educational attainments of our Looked after children nearer to those of their peers.
- Have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked after children who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.

#### **To support Every Child Matters five outcomes:**

- Be healthy - for example, helping learners to adopt healthy lifestyles, build their self-esteem, eat and drink well and lead active lives.
- Stay safe - for example, keeping learners safe from bullying, harassment and other dangers.

- Enjoy and achieve - for example, enabling learners to make good progress in their work and personal development and to enjoy their education.
- Make a positive contribution - for example, ensuring that learners understand their rights and responsibilities, are listened to, and participate in the life of the community.
- Achieve economic well-being - for example, helping pupils to gain the skills and knowledge needed for future employment.

**In pursuit of this Policy, we will:**

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked after children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a local advisor to ensure that the needs of Looked after children in the trust are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Looked after children.

**DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The name of the Designated Teacher for Looked after children is available in each school / academy.

The Designated Teacher needs to:

- Be a qualified teacher or headteacher.
- Maintain a register of all Looked after children (this includes Looked after children to both Gloucestershire and other local authorities). This will include a record of:
  - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
  - Type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential, adoptive.
  - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
  - Ensure statutory documentation is kept up to date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability i.e. Personal Education Plan (PEP)
  - Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns. E.g. name of child, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
  - Share Child Protection / disability information (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information).
  - Relevant health information.
  - Baseline information and all test results.
  - Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.

**Trust Board**

The name of the Designated trustee for Looked after children is Reverend John Longuet-Higgins.

**What every Designated Trustee for Looked after Children needs to know:**

- Number of Looked after Children in Trust.
- Number of Looked after Children with up to date PEPs.
- Overall attainment of Looked after Children in the school / performance compared to peers.
- Number of Looked after Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and statements.
- Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of Looked after Children.
- Number of Looked after Children who have been excluded in previous 12 months.
- How LA supports educational achievement of Looked after Children.

**The Trust Board will:**

- Ensure the DT has opportunity to attend training and that school staff, trustees and local advisors are aware of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Statutory guidance.
- Have knowledge of the Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked after children, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004.
- Make certain that there is a dedicated trustee to champion and monitor the work of the trust in supporting its Looked after children as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children.
- Take an active approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Looked after children attending the school.
- Ensure that Designated Teacher and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the head teacher.

**Whole Trust approach:**

- The voice of the child will be listened to and acted upon.
- We will celebrate the achievements of Looked after children.
- Our staff will have high expectations of the child, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- Our Looked after children will have a special, trusted adult in school that is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- For our young Looked after children, there will be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect them from school.
- Training will be provided so that all our staff understand the needs of Looked after children in order that they actively promote the child's best interests. That they are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the child's ability to engage in the learning process - including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem.
- Adults in our schools will be sensitive to the child's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status.
- We will ensure that effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established.
- There will be appropriate information sharing about individual Looked after children.
- Our DT will ensure that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within our trust and between school, carers, parents (as appropriate) and outside agencies. They will also ensure that high educational expectations are maintained.
- We will actively support and encourage the engagement of Looked after children in out of school hours learning.
- Our staff will work in partnership with carers, agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- We will support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance
- Our staff will help our Looked after children to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis.
- Our staff will be aware that being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given.
- We will make certain that our staff are aware of possible unresolved feelings the child may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:**

- Any special educational needs and disabilities will be quickly identified and appropriate provision will be made.
- We will have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Looked after children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this.
- If the child has a statement of special educational need, we will ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews; dates can be obtained from the social worker.

**Admissions and transitions:****We will:**

- Prioritise Looked after children within our own admissions procedures and admit pupils as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing trust stability for Looked after children.
- Ensure a warm welcome to our schools by providing appropriate induction for all Looked after children so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate.
- Make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition where the receiving school is made known.
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

**Attendance: (see our attendance policy and school handbooks)****We will:**

- Establish a first day of absence procedure where attendance is identified as a problem.
- Inform the Carer / Education Welfare service / Social Worker / Parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance.
- We will acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.

**Exclusion: (see our exclusion policy)****We will:**

- Actively follow the Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Looked after children recommendations.

**Multi-agency liaison:**

- We will support the child to engage fully in planning and decision making.
- The DT will liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared.
- There will be a well-planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented.
- There will be a clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved.
- Our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child.
- We will be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the parents.
- Our DT will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical or other information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations.
- We will encourage each of our Looked after children to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self – esteem and learning.

**Personal Education Plans (PEPs):****We will:**

- Have a PEP for each child which includes appropriate targets. This will be compatible with the timing of the child's Care Plan. Other school plans e.g. Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme will feed into and form a part of the PEP. Contribute to the process whereby all Looked after children have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place ideally, within 20 days of starting the school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (My Plan, EHCP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need).

- Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Looked after children have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set.
- Make or support applications for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) e.g. for those who are at risk of underachieving academically or for extra-curricular activities; through discussions at PEP meetings.
- Hold a PEP meeting in time for every statutory care review that involves the social worker, foster carers, child and parent if appropriate. Additional attendees may include e.g. Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare officer etc. We will seek the views of the child as to appropriate attendees in line with the statutory guidance.

**The head teacher or DSL will be responsible for briefing all staff on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.**

### **Biblical Underpinning for Church of England Schools**

Luke 18. 15-17 in which Jesus says "let the children come to me... the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" and "whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it". (Good News Bible) The school holds every child in trust and sees the child having a Kingdom shaped dignity.