



Bracken Hill School Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy

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Policy Type: Whole School

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current regulations

The Governors of the school recognise that all staff play a vital role in the achievement of high standards and in providing our pupils with the best opportunities matched to their needs.

Guiding Principles

At Bracken Hill School we strive to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where everyone is valued and respected equally. We aim to provide an inclusive education where children develop independent learning skills and are taught according to need whatever their age, gender, background, beliefs or abilities. National legislation regarding disabilities, special education needs, equality, race relations and related aspects underpin this policy which also reflects other national, local and in-house policies and guidance.

Bracken Hill aims to maximise opportunity for every pupil to succeed. Children and young people who are looked after by local authorities or have been looked after by the local authority are one of the groups most likely to underachieve nationally. The school is committed to supporting looked after pupils to achieve their full potential alongside other pupils, to enjoy their learning and to experience success in school.

Definition of “Looked After Children and Previously Look After Children”

In UK law, children in care are referred to as *looked-after children*. A child is considered *looked after* if they are in the care of a local authority for more than 24 hours, as defined in the Children Act 1989. This applies when a child is:

- Provided with accommodation by the local authority for more than 24 hours (with or without parental agreement).
- Subject to an interim care order or full care order (or a permanence order in Scotland).
- Subject to an emergency legal order placing them into care for their immediate safety.
- Placed in a secure children’s home, secure training centre, or young offender institution.
- An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child with no responsible adult to care for them.

These examples reflect common circumstances in which children enter care.

A *previously looked-after child* is one who is no longer in the care of a local authority in England or Wales because they are now the subject of:

- An adoption order,
- A special guardianship order, or
- A child arrangements order specifying who the child lives with and when.
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A child is also considered previously looked after if they were:

- Adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales, meaning care provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or similar body.

Children who return to live with their birth family after being looked after are not classified as previously looked-after children under DfE definitions.

Aims

- To work collaboratively with the Local Authority, the Children with a Disability Team, foster carers, medical and nursing services, therapy services and all other relevant stakeholders to ensure that each child's educational, social and health needs are fully understood and met.
- To contribute to a coordinated and effective service for all looked-after children, ensuring education plays a central role in their overall care and planning.
- To ensure that looked-after and previously looked-after children have equitable access to high-quality learning, are able to participate alongside their peers, and have their right to privacy and anonymity respected where this is their preference.
- To comply with Local Authority policies and statutory guidance relating to the education, welfare and care of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

To ensure these aims are achieved, **Bracken Hill School will:**

- Have a Designated Teacher to co-ordinate the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children. The Designated Teacher is **Kate Austin**, who ensures staff are aware of which pupils are looked after, understands each child's individual circumstances (including parental responsibility and access arrangements), and maintains effective communication with carers.
- Liaise effectively with all agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings, including PEP reviews, care reviews, and multi-agency planning meetings, in line with DfE expectations of cross-agency collaboration.
- Work in partnership with carers, parents and those with parental responsibility to ensure that looked-after children receive their full educational entitlements, including access to school information, events and support networks.
- Ensure that all records are kept and maintained appropriately, including PEPs and outcomes of looked-after child review meetings, consistent with statutory guidance requiring accurate, up-to-date documentation.
- Provide information to the Governing Body and Local Authority regarding the progress, attainment and wider outcomes of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils on roll. This is part of required monitoring and accountability.
- Secure appropriate training for the Designated Teacher and other relevant staff to ensure the school continues to meet statutory duties and effectively supports looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher meets regularly with staff who teach looked-after or previously looked-after pupils, providing guidance to ensure needs are identified and met, as expected in the Designated Teacher's responsibilities.

- Apply for and monitor the impact of the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) grant to ensure it is used effectively to improve outcomes for eligible pupils.
- Report progress and any concerns to the relevant Virtual School in accordance with local authority timelines, reflecting the statutory role of Virtual School Heads in overseeing educational outcomes for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The Governing Body will fulfil their responsibilities to looked-after and previously looked-after children through:

- Ensuring that this policy is fully implemented and that the school meets its statutory duties under DfE guidance for supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Nominating a governor with specific oversight of the well-being and educational outcomes of looked-after children. The named governor for this responsibility is **Andy Machalski**. Statutory guidance recommends that governing bodies maintain strategic oversight of the school's provision for looked-after pupils.
- Ensuring that governors engage in appropriate and relevant training opportunities to develop their understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of looked-after and previously looked-after children. The DfE emphasises that governing bodies must ensure the Designated Teacher and governors are properly supported through ongoing training.
- Monitoring that school staff receive suitable and up-to-date training to ensure they understand the needs, rights and challenges faced by looked-after children and are equipped to meet them effectively. This aligns with expectations for schools to maintain a trained workforce able to support this vulnerable group.

This policy will be reviewed biennially – Next review September 2027