

Children we care for and previously cared for children policy

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1. Aims

The MILL Academy (the Trust) is a school trust currently comprising of: The Henry Box School, Queen Emma's Primary School and Finstock Church of England Primary School. The Trust is run by a Board of Trustees. The Trustees acknowledge and understand their responsibilities as laid down by the Department for Education (DfE).

For this policy, the Trust aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for children we care for and previously cared for children.
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of children we care for and previously cared for children, and supports other staff members to do this too.
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

It also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

It also takes into account [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

This policy complies with our funding agreements for each relevant school:

<https://www.millacademy.co.uk/1409/policies-and-statutory-information/category/30/funding-agreements>

and the Trust's articles of association:

3. Definitions

Children we care for (CWCF) are registered pupils that are:

- in the care of a local authority, or
- provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

Previously cared for children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:
 - A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them.
 - A special guardianship order.
 - An adoption order.
- They appear to the Trust to have:
 - been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
 - ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a children we care for care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's children we care for, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously cared for children.

4. Identity of our designated teacher

Each of our schools has a specific designated teacher appointed to children we care for and previously cared for children.

The Henry Box School

The designated teacher is Stephen Stewart.

You can contact him by calling the school on 01993 703955 or via office.4050@henrybox.oxon.sch.uk

Queen Emma's Primary School

The designated teacher is Leanne Dixon.

You can contact her by calling the school on 01993 704770 or via office.2304@queen-emmas.oxon.sch.uk

Finstock Church of England Primary School

The designated teacher is Leanne Dixon.

You can contact her by calling the school on 01993 868314 or via office.3040@finstock.oxon.sch.uk

All of our designated teachers take a lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children we care for and previously cared for children at our schools. Each designated teacher is your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

5. Role of the designated teacher

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children we care for and previously cared for children.
- Promote the educational achievement of every child we care for and previously cared for children on roll by:
 - Working with Virtual School Lead (VSL) teachers and Social Care.
 - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how children we care for and previously cared for children learn and achieve.
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Promote a culture in which children we care for and previously cared for children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities.
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with children we care for and previously cared for children.
- Work directly with children we care for and previously cared for children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of children we care for PEPs.
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children we care for and previously cared for children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Involve parents and **carers** of previously cared for children in decisions affecting their child's education.

5.2 Supporting children we care for

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure children we care for PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs.
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs.
- Monitor and track how children we care for attainment progresses under their PEPs.
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP.
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place.
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils.
- Ensure that:
 - A child we care for PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered.
 - PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced.
 - The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and the VSL ahead of the statutory review of their care plan.
- Transfer a child we care for PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version.

5.3 Supporting both children we care for and previously cared for children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of children we care for and previously cared for children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding.
- Work with VSL to agree how pupil premium funding for children we care for can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- Help raise the awareness of parents and **carers** of previously cared for children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children.
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously cared for children.
- Encourage parents' and **carers'** involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use.
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of children we care for and previously cared for children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEND) of children we care for and previously cared for children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this.
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to children we care for, is followed.

- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care plans (EHCPs) that a child we care for may have.
- Ensure that, with the help of VSL, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEND issues in children we care for and previously cared for children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary.
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in children we care for and previously cared for children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services.
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for children we care for, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs.
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously cared for children.

5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of children we care for and previously cared for children.
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom.
- Be open and accessible to parents and **carers** of previously cared for children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education.
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSLs and SEND departments.
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for children we care for, such as:
 - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans.
 - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSLs when children we care for are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action.
 - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption.
 - Making sure that, if a child we care for moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process.
- Seek advice from VSLs about meeting the needs of individual previously cared for children, but only with the agreement of their parents or **carers**.
- Make sure that for each child we care for:
 - There's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress.

- School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents.
- Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips.
- Where a child we care for is at risk of exclusion:
 - Contact the VSL as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
 - Working with the VSL and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour.
- Where a previously cared for child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or **carers** before seeking advice from the VSL on avoiding exclusion.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by The Designated Lead Teachers.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour, Exclusion and Attendance
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Students
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Equality and Equity