KING EDWARD VI FOUNDATION BIRMINGHAM

Educational excellence for our City

KING EDWARD VI ACADEMY TRUST BIRMINGHAM

Looked-After Children Policy & Procedures	
Responsible Board/ Committee	Academy Trust Foundation Trust
Policy Type	Central B
Foundation/Academy Policy Owner	Education
Statutory	Yes
Publish Online	Yes
Last Review Date	July 2026
Review Cycle	Annual This policy will not expire but will be reviewed as per its designated cycle. This policy remains effective whilst the review is taking place and will only become non-applicable once the updated version has been approved.
Next Review Date	July 2027
Version	3
School	King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls
School Policy Owner	Lyndsey Maginnis
ISGB/SGB Approval Date	19th October 2026

KING EDWARD VI FOUNDATION LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Nationally, looked-after children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), compared with their peers. The Foundation recognises that it has a major part to play in ensuring that students within its care are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and to achieve economic wellbeing.

2. DEFINITIONS

Within this policy, "the Foundation" refers to the Foundation Charity and the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham ("Academy Trust"). The Foundation Charity is a legal entity: The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham, comprising the two Independent Schools and the Foundation Office.

According to the NSPCC, a child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is referred to as a looked-after child. Looked-after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer because it puts the child first.

In general, looked-after children are:

- Living with foster parents;
- Living in a residential children's home; or
- Living in residential settings such as schools or secure units.

There are various reasons why children and young people enter care:

- The child's parents might have agreed to this. For example, if they are too unwell to care for their child or if their child has a disability and requires respite care.
- The child could be an unaccompanied asylum seeker, with no responsible adult to care for them.
- Children's services may have intervened because they felt the child was at significant risk of harm. If this is the case, the child is usually subject to a court-made legal order.

A child stops being looked-after when they are adopted, return home, or turn 18. Local authorities are required to support children leaving care at 18 until they are at least 21. This may involve them continuing to live with their foster family.

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils who fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked-after by a local authority but ceased to be because 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 governing board 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 because of being adopted.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Foundation

Helping looked-after children to succeed is a fundamental principle of the Foundation, and it is committed to providing quality education for all pupils. The Foundation will:

- Adopt the definition of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children set out within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- Ensure looked-after children and previously looked-after children are prioritised in each Academy's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked after Children) (England) Regulations 2006. (These regulations require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to looked-after children and previously looked-after children in their oversubscription criteria, and Grammar schools must give top priority to children in this group who meet the entry requirements).
- Ensure that each school within the Foundation identifies a Designated Teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children.

The Foundation will champion the needs of looked-after children, raise awareness, and challenge negative stereotypes about them, to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

The School

The school will ensure that looked-after, previously looked-after, and, where appropriate, children in kinship care have timely access to Early Help services where concerns are emerging but statutory intervention is not required.

Headteacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children, whose role is outlined below. It is essential that another suitable person is identified promptly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance, and any exclusion of looked-after children and previously looked-after children, and act where progress, conduct, or attendance falls below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance, and conduct of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that employees within the school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy document.

The Governing Body

- Identify a nominated Governor for looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Maintain an overview of the needs and progress of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of both looked-after children and those who have been previously looked-after.
- Monitor the academic progress of looked-after children and previously looked-after children through an annual report.The report should set out the following:

    - The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
    - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to that of other pupils.
    - Their GCSE, BTEC, and A Level results and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
    - The number of suspensions and permanent exclusions (if any).
    - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
    - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

- Ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of the respective Academy by ensuring looked-after children and previously looked-after children achieve and enjoy their time at the school.
- Support the Head, the Designated Teacher, and other employees in ensuring that the needs of looked-after children and previously looked-after children are recognised and met.

The Designated Teacher (DT)

Their role is to act as a source of advice and expertise and to champion the needs of looked-after children within the school, as well as work with the local authority that looks after the child to ensure their personal education plan (see glossary) is developed and implemented. The DT can delegate aspects of the role, e.g. administrative tasks; however, the role can only be undertaken by a qualified teacher who has completed at least two years of teaching. Their roles and responsibilities include to:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The DT should understand the educational vulnerabilities experienced by children in kinship care arrangements and be aware of the support available through the Virtual School Head (see glossary) where appropriate.
- Where appropriate and with parental consent, seek advice from the Virtual School Head in relation to children in kinship care arrangements.
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
    - Working with Virtual School Heads.
    - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
    - The factors that can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve.
    - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after 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 looked-after children's PEPs.
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that

any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are promptly and effectively addressed.

- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.
- Ensure that looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational requirements.
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs.
- Monitor and track how looked-after children's 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 to make progress and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP.
- Ensure that the identified actions of PEPs are implemented.
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils.
- Ensure that:
    - A looked-after child's 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 been taken forward and what has not, noting any resources that may be required to further support the child and from where these resources may be sourced.
    - The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan.

- Transfer a looked-after child's 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.

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding.

- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.

- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after 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 looked-after children.

- Encourage parents' and guardians' 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 are aware of and understand the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour, and future career planning.

- Evidence shows that two-thirds of looked-after children have special educational needs; therefore, the Designated Teacher should ensure that teachers also have awareness and understanding of this.

- Ensure the SEND Code of Practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed.

- Ensure that PEPs work in harmony with any Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have.

- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary.

- Although looked-after children have many of the same health issues as their peers, the extent of these is often greater because of their past experiences. For example, almost half of children in care have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Delays in identifying and addressing their emotional wellbeing and mental health needs can have far-reaching effects on all aspects of their lives, including their chances of reaching their full potential and leading happy, healthy lives as adults.

- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after 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 looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs.

- Liaise with health services to inform aspects of care planning, to reduce any negative impact of a child's physical, emotional, and mental health on their education.

- Health and the Designated Teacher should co-ordinate assessments and reviews of the child's care plan and EHC plan, when appropriate, to ensure that, taken together, they meet the child's needs without unnecessarily duplicating information.

- Implement mechanisms to understand the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children.

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children to ensure there is a clear plan for all children who return home that reflects current and previous assessments, focuses on outcomes, and includes details of services and support required.

- 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.

- Provide evidence to external agencies, if requested, to help assess whether the necessary improvements have been made to ensure a looked-after child under a care order is safe to return home. Following an assessment, the Designated Teacher will liaise with services to support the child's return home, including in cases where the return is unplanned, ensuring that the child continues to be adequately safeguarded.

- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education.

- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments.

- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:

- Finding ways to ensure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans.
- Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and working 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 that 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 looked-after child moves school, their new Designated Teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process.

- Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians.

- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
  - There is an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, 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 when necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips.

- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion:
  - Contact the VSH 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 VSH and the child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour.

Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

The Designated Teacher at this school is: Lyndsey Maginnis

You can contact them by l.maginnis@chg.kevibham.org

4. Post-16

Students mainly leave care when they are 18. Social workers should develop a Pathway Plan for the student to leave care, with planning starting before the student's 16th birthday. The plan should involve others, including the student, carers and school. If the student has Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities, the plan may include advice from SENDCos.

Care leavers should be supported to find further education colleges and higher education establishments that meet their needs. They should also be made aware of and receive the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Pathway Plans include:

- What will happen when the student leaves care, e.g. living arrangements, finances.
- What support has been promised to the student (e.g. social workers, school).
- What steps the student needs to take for themselves.

A Personal Adviser works with the looked-after child once the social worker steps away on their 18th birthday. The Adviser's role is to help the student fulfil their pathway plan. To ensure a smooth transition, the Adviser will often start working with the student from the age of 16.

5. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy considers section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 and the documents referenced below.

In England, the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 aims to ensure children in care receive high-quality care and services, which are focused on and tailored to their needs.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act 1989 to require local authorities in England to appoint at least one person to promote the educational achievement of their looked-after children.

In England, the Department for Education (DfE) has provided guidance and regulations on care planning, placement and case review (PDF) (DfE, 2021).

In England, schools must have a Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The DfE has published statutory guidance for local authority maintained schools on their roles and responsibilities (DfE, 2018b).

The DfE has also published guidance on promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children (PDF) (DfE, 2018c).

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published a guideline on Looked after children and young people, which sets out how organisations, practitioners, and carers should work together to deliver high-quality care, stable placements and nurturing relationships for children in care (NICE, 2021).

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (DfE). The guidance sets out the legal duties that schools and colleges must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (DfE) applies to all organisations and agencies with functions relating to children and all education providers and childcare settings.

Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE, 2024) outlines how local authorities should support children who are cared for by extended family, friends or connected individuals.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 expanded the duties of the local authority to promote the education of children who previously had looked-after status but no longer do so.
The SEND code of practice provides information on certain duties and responsibilities towards looked-after children with a Statement of Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

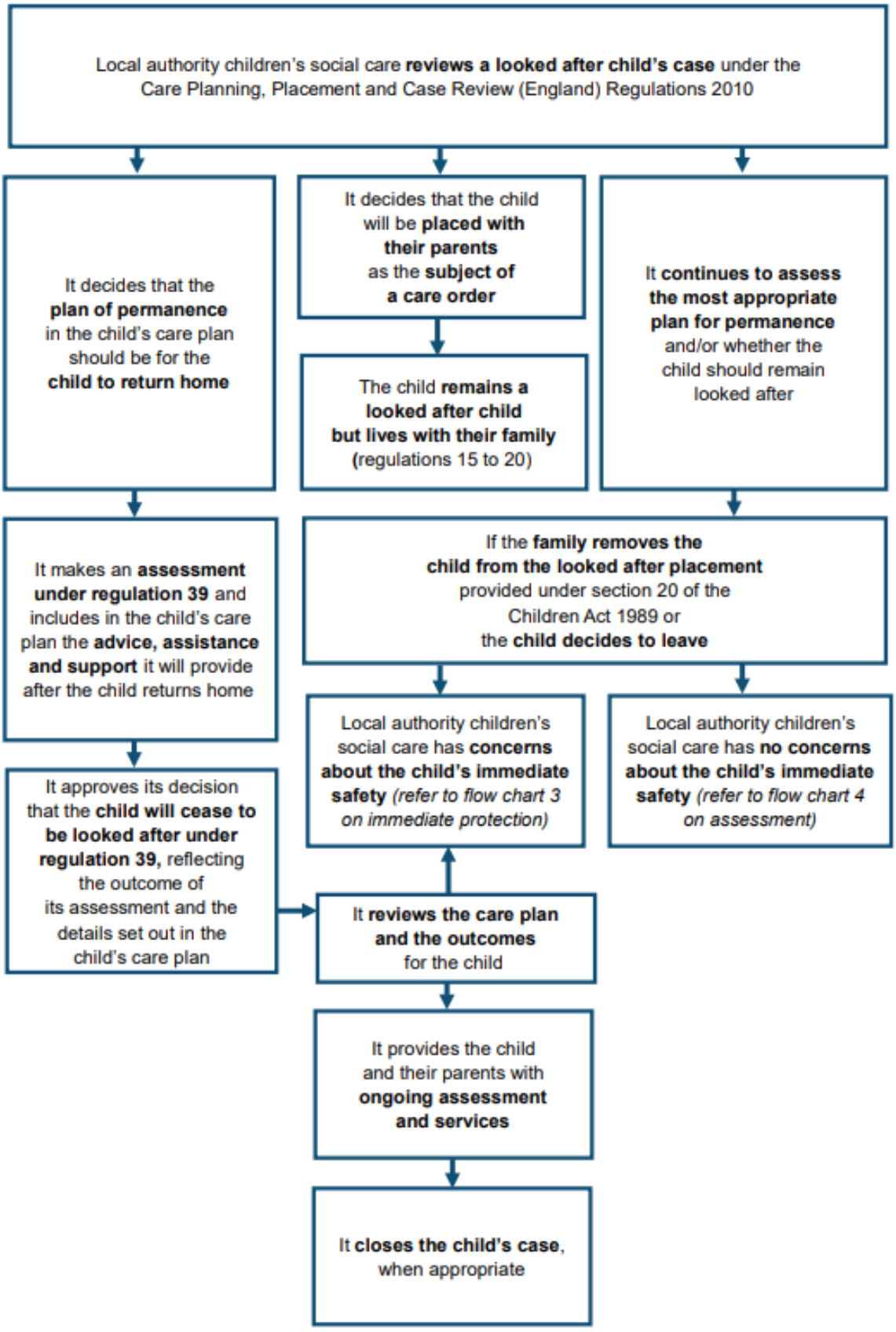
6. Links With Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Attendance
- Relational Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Anti-bullying
- Suspensions and Exclusions
- SEND

- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Admissions

APPENDIX 1: Looked-after Children Returning Home to Their Families (current national statutory guidance)



APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY

Personal Education Plan (PEP)
All looked-after children have a care plan. A PEP is a statutory requirement to ensure that a record is maintained regarding the child's educational progress and thus it forms an integral part of the child's overall care plan. The PEP should detail what needs to happen in order for the looked-after child to fulfil their potential. The local authority is under a duty to ensure that the PEP fully reflects the educational needs of the child, remains relevant to the child's age, ability and aptitude, and is implemented effectively.

The statutory guidance on promoting the education of looked-after children requires that a range of educational and developmental needs are covered in a PEP. These include:

- Ongoing catch-up support for those who have fallen behind with schoolwork.
- Provision of immediate suitable education where a child is not in school.
- Transition support needs where needed, such as when a child begins to attend a new school or returns to school; or when a child has a plan for permanence and may change schools as part of that plan.
- Support needed to help the child realise their short and long-term academic achievements and aspirations. This includes:
    - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national curriculum key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
    - Careers advice and guidance and financial information about further and higher education, training and employment.
    - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.
    - School attendance and, where appropriate, behaviour support.

A PEP must be reviewed regularly as part of the looked-after child (LAC) review. The review process enables information to be shared by others, including the child's parents, carers, school and other professionals, to gain a comprehensive view of the child's situation.

Virtual School Head (VSH)
Under Section 99 of the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities are required to appoint at least one person who is tasked with promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked-after by the local authority they work for, including children placed out of authority.

It is the role of the VSH to ensure that there are effective systems in place to:

- Maintain an up-to-date roll of its looked-after children who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress.
- Inform headteachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked-after by the VSH's local authority.
- Ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP.
- Ensure up-to-date, effective and high-quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes and that all looked-after children, wherever they are placed, have such a PEP.
- Ensure the educational achievement of children looked-after by the local authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment of looked-after children through the local authority's corporate parenting structures.
- VSHs, working with education settings, should implement pupil premium arrangements

for looked-after children.

Kinship Care
Kinship care refers to any situation in which a child is being raised by a friend or family member who is not their parent. The arrangement may be temporary or longer-term. The following are all types of kinship care arrangements; however, this list is not exhaustive:

- Informal kinship care arrangements (not approved foster care) including:
    - A private family arrangement in which a close family member who does not hold parental responsibility raises the child and:
        - The local authority has had no major role in making the arrangements for the child.
        - A Family Court has not made an order in respect of the care of the child.
    - Where a child under the age of 16 is being provided with accommodation for less than 28 days by an individual in their own home who is not a close relative.
    - Where a 16- or 17-year-old is being provided with accommodation by an individual who is not a close relative in their own home.

- A private fostering arrangement in which someone who is not a close relative of the child looks after the child for 28 days or more (as per section 66(1)(a) and (b) of the Children Act 1989).
- Where a 'lives with' child arrangements order has been granted in respect of the child, in favour of someone who is a friend or family member but is not the child's parent. Special guardianship is a Family Court order that places a child or young person in long-term care with someone other than their parent(s), e.g. a friend or family member. The person(s) with whom the child lives will become the child's special guardian. It differs from adoption because it keeps more links to the birth family than adoption. With adoption, legal ties to the birth family are severed permanently. With special guardianship, this is not the case, as the order is revocable.
- Where a child is a 'looked-after child' by virtue of either an interim or final care order or being accommodated by the local authority (usually under section 20 of the Children Act 1989) and each of the following applies (this may be described as 'kinship foster care' or 'family and friends foster care'):
    - The child is being cared for by a friend or family member who is not their parent; and
    - The friend or family member is approved as a local authority foster carer temporarily or following full assessment.

- Where an adoption order has been granted in respect of the child and, prior to the making of the order, the adopter was a friend or family member.

NB In relation to **private fostering,** "relative" has the meaning given in section 105 of the Children Act 1989. It includes only the following: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt (whether by full blood, half blood, or by marriage or civil partnership), and stepparent (a married stepparent, including a civil partner).

For the purposes of this kinship definition, the term private fostering arrangement includes only individuals accommodating a child. It does not apply to organisations or bodies.

Attachment and being Trauma Informed
Attachment difficulties happen when a child does not receive the comfort and security needed from their main carer(s) in early life. As a result, the child may struggle to form strong emotional bonds with others.

Attachment issues are common in looked-after children. The impact of their early life often presents in schools as social and emotional needs. Examples include fear, anger, distrust, depression, or avoidance behaviours.

Trauma-informed means that the school understands the impact of trauma on the child, and adults respond in a way that sees not only the issue at hand, but also what has gone on before.