Definition of Disadvantage at Fringford CofE Primary School

What we mean by 'disadvantaged pupils'

At Fringford CofE Primary School, we recognise that disadvantage can take many forms and affect children's ability to access education and thrive at school. **We understand that disadvantage is a state, not a trait** – children may move in and out of disadvantage as their circumstances change, and being disadvantaged does not define who a child is or what they can achieve.

Disadvantaged pupils are those who are more susceptible to negative outcomes and require additional support to thrive. These pupils face a greater imbalance between risk factors and protective factors in their lives, making them more vulnerable to contextual and systemic barriers.

Forms of disadvantage

Disadvantage at our school can include:

1. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Pupils who have a learning difficulty or disability that creates barriers to accessing the curriculum or school life, including those with needs related to:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

2. Family circumstances

Pupils experiencing challenges at home, such as:

- Being looked after by the local authority (LAC) or previously looked after (PLAC)
- Being known, or previously known, to children's social care

- Being a young carer
- Having a parent/carer or family member in prison
- Experiencing bereavement, family separation, or divorce
- Living in a single-parent household
- Experiencing domestic abuse
- Having parents/carers with mental health or substance misuse issues
- Being part of a highly mobile family (e.g. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, military families)
- Being privately fostered or adopted
- Being at risk of homelessness or living in temporary accommodation

3. Socio-economic disadvantage

Pupils facing financial hardship or poverty, including:

- Those eligible for free school meals (FSM) or who have been eligible in the last 6 years (Ever 6 FSM)
- Families experiencing unemployment, low income, or debt
- Families living in areas of high deprivation
- Families just above the FSM threshold but still struggling financially

4. Health issues

Pupils with physical or mental health needs that create barriers to learning, including:

- Long-term medical conditions
- Mental health difficulties
- Poor attendance due to health reasons
- Pupils recovering from illness or injury

5. Changes in engagement or behaviour

Pupils showing:

- A sudden decline in academic performance or attendance
- Changes in behaviour or attitude to learning
- Withdrawal from peers or activities
- Signs of anxiety, low self-esteem, or emotional distress

- Disengagement from school life

6. Minority status

Pupils who may face additional barriers due to being part of a minority group, including:

- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Pupils from minority religious groups
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupils who identify as LGBTQ+ or are perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Pupils who are a 'minority of one' in our school community
- Pupils with a refugee or asylum-seeking background

Understanding disadvantage

Disadvantage means that pupils:

- Are **more susceptible to negative outcomes** in their learning, wellbeing, behaviour, and attendance
- **Need additional support** beyond what is typically provided to all pupils
- Face a **greater imbalance between risk factors and protective factors** in their lives
- Are **more vulnerable to contextual and systemic factors** such as poverty, discrimination, trauma, or lack of access to resources

Disadvantage is a state, not a trait. A child's circumstances can change over time – families may experience periods of difficulty and then recover, or new challenges may emerge. We recognise that:

- **Disadvantage is temporary for many children** – we regularly review which pupils are facing barriers and adjust our support accordingly
- **Children are not defined by their disadvantage** – we maintain the highest expectations for all pupils, regardless of their background or current circumstances
- **Vulnerability can increase or decrease** – we monitor pupils' wellbeing and circumstances closely, understanding that children may need different levels of support at different times

- **Lower prior attainment may be a result of disadvantage** – pupils who do not meet GLD or who underperform in KS1 may face additional barriers, and we prioritise early intervention to help them keep up with their peers.

Our commitment

We are committed to identifying and removing barriers for all our disadvantaged pupils, ensuring they receive the support they need to achieve well and thrive at Fringford CofE Primary School. We recognise that disadvantage does not limit potential, and we maintain high expectations for all our pupils regardless of their background or circumstances. We monitor the progress and wellbeing of our disadvantaged pupils closely through our additional needs register and regular pupil progress meetings. We use evidence-informed strategies to ensure that they have equal access to opportunities, achieve well academically, and develop the skills and confidence they need for their future. We work in partnership with families, external agencies, and specialists to provide holistic support that addresses the whole child and reduces the impact of disadvantage on their education and wellbeing.

This definition will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects the needs of our school community and aligns with statutory guidance and best practice.