



Whitley Abbey Primary School

Policy for Looked After Children

December 2023

Policy last reviewed: July 2022

Reviewed by: Sam Carter

Frequency of review: Annually

Ratified by Governors : December 2023

Date of next review: December 2024

Designated Teacher is Miss Carter

The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mrs Susan Franklin (Safeguarding Governor)

“An educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. Effective schools are educationally inclusive schools. This shows, not only in their performance, but also in their ethos and their willingness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. This does not mean treating all pupils in the same way. Rather it involves taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs.”

The above quote is taken from ‘Evaluating Educational Inclusion – Guidance for Inspectors and Schools’ (DfES 2000) and forms the rationale for this policy.

We are also aware that Looked After Children constitute a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taken into Public Care, but that they are also individuals and members of other groups. We will take this into account when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatization.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

Objectives - Looked After Children in this school will

- receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support in line with school policies and local authority guidelines.
- have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

Teachers and other staff in this school will

- receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and psychological well-being of Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them
- plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children

The Looked After designated Teacher and Senior Management will

- identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place

- ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
- ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies

1. Induction

To ensure a supportive and sympathetic induction for Looked After Children admitted to our school, the following arrangements are in place:

- The designated teacher will arrange a transition meeting with any previous setting to ensure that all relevant information is gained prior to the admission date. If this is not possible or if there has not been any previous setting then he will meet with all relevant parties, this will include the Foster Carer, Social Worker and parents if appropriate.
- Careful consideration will then be made into the most appropriate start date and, on some occasions it may be necessary to have a reduced timetable at first, this is only required in rare situations.
- The child will be met on their first day by a member of the school's pastoral team
- The designated teacher will then meet them during the first couple of weeks and will also check that the teacher has no concerns. It may be necessary to meet with Foster Carers.

2. Pastoral Support

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support the following arrangements are in place

- A member of the pastoral team is available to meet with children either on their request, the class teachers, or the carers. She/he is available to work on friendships, emotional support or self-esteem.
- The class teacher will be made aware of the needs of the child and will be asked to monitor them in terms of academic progress, emotional wellbeing and general presentation.
- The class teacher/SENCo will provide information for the PEP and LAC reviews, which will be put on to the ePEP system by the Designated Teacher.
- Should any concerns arise these will be discussed with the carers if appropriate and the allocated Social Worker.

3. Information

- The Designated Teacher will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the Designated Teacher will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.
- Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Designated Teacher of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing

particular difficulties. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information, to be determined by the School pastoral team or the Designated Teacher .

- Essential information about a LAC is put onto CPOMs (the schools safeguarding recording system) by the Designated Teacher or the pastoral team.
- The Designated Teacher will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is in order to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school. The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the young person.
- Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:
 1. The Designated Teacher will collate the assessment data for each child and put this in the Epep.
 2. This is reported to the Foster Carers at different times during the school year. Parent's consultations-PEP meetings and LAC review meetings. Depending on the age of the child it might be relevant to involve the child in this.
 3. In consultation with the class teacher the Designated Teacher will set targets for the child to work towards achieving. One of these will be around writing. A time scale will be given to achieve the targets and timely interventions put in place to support the child.
 4. This information will be analysed by the Designated Teacher to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole. Progress and attainment are reported to Governors and to Foster carers and social workers termly.
- Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected by the pastoral team and passed onto the Designated Teacher who will report any concerns to the foster carers and social workers. It might be relevant to discuss this with the child to see if there are any issues being experienced. This is reported at Parent Consultation meetings and in the annual reports at the end of the school year. The Designated Teacher will report on attendance and punctuality at PEP Meetings and LAC Reviews. This information will be analysed by the Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.
- Information about the behaviour of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

The class teacher or pastoral team or Designated Teacher will report on behaviour using CPOMs. The Designated Teacher will look for patterns in behaviour and consult with SENCo on possible strategies to support positive behaviour. We always begin by rewarding good choices. If after intervention there is no improvement a meeting will be called with foster carers to discuss a way forward.

This information will be analysed by The Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion so early intervention can take place.

4. Strategies

4.1 Curriculum

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The Designated Teacher will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff

- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties
- Talk to the child

If concerns persist over time then issues around Learning Difficulties may need to be considered, see the School Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy for further information.

We recognise that there are factors, which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as effectively as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that underachievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results. If progress is not as could be expected, the school will consider the use of incentive schemes, mentoring and use of interventions.

We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark Mother's Day/Father's Day or to investigate family history may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively.

4.2 Attendance

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Designated Teacher to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- We will continue to work with the Local Authority School Attendance Officer who will be involved fully in planning and delivering strategies to improve attendance.
- The school promotes good attendance and punctuality by rewarding individuals each term.

4.3 Behaviour

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Designated Teacher as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, Specialist Teachers and Education Access will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the problem behaviour.
The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with the school SENCo.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring the school will arrange a meeting as soon as possible with all relevant parties and a member of the Local Authority to consider if all measures have been taken

4.4 Homework

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete homework, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so. There are times set aside for children to complete homework at break times/clubs etc.

4.5 Extra-Curricular Activities

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school based activities because of poor relationships with their peers, for example. As we believe it is essential that Looked After Children are able to play a full part in school life, the following strategies are in place to help them to do this:

- The Designated Teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extracurricular activities at the beginning of each term when clubs list become available.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities. Through Parents consultation and PEP Meetings.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with LEA support services such as Education Access or the Study Support Co-ordinator to develop strategies for increasing the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities if their uptake is shown to be low.

The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiatives will be monitored and evaluated by

- Collection and analysis of information
- Discussion with school staff, carers, Social Workers and staff from LA Support Services, both informally and during meetings eg those set up to write Personal Education Plans
- Discussions with Looked After Children
- Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of school strategies lies with the Headteacher

5. Liaison with Outside Agencies

To ensure that all those involved in the education and care of Looked After Children work together in their best interests, the Designated Teacher will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives
- Liaising with Social Workers to ensure all Looked After Children have a Personal Education Plan
- Participation in and co-ordination of Review and Planning meetings for Looked After Children. Statutory school procedures such as Annual Reviews for children with Statements of SEN will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible and appropriate.

In addition, school management will do everything possible to enable class teachers or other appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Designated Teacher is Miss Sam Carter

The role of the Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. For this reason, the person appointed will be given the time required to carry out these duties. The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Looked After Co-ordinator's are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Looked After Coordinator's will

- Attend training sessions organised by the LA
- Cascade this training to school staff
- Arrange and/or deliver training to all staff, including those newly appointed, on issues affecting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and the ways in which educational disadvantage can be overcome
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children in the Child Protection Arena
- Work closely with Social Workers to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans which will inform Care Plans
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to SSD care planning meetings
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans

6.2 The Head Teacher and Senior Management

The responsibility for the educational and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Headteacher, although some of the day-to-day tasks may be delegated to other staff. Working with the Senior Management Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Looked After Co-ordinator, are enabled to carry them out.

6.3 The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mrs Susan Franklin

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis

- The number of Looked After pupils in the school
- A comparison of test scores for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Pupil destinations

The named governor must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory assessments
- Careers guidance
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities

7. Evaluation

The general success and appropriateness of this policy will be evaluated annually. In addition, we will monitor and analyse the impact of this policy on pupils, staff and parents of different ethnic groups. The results of the evaluation will be passed to the school Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children before being presented to the Governing Body.

The next review will be **December 2024**