

Looked After Children

Introduction

We have a special duty to promote the well-being and achievement of looked after children and young people, to diminish the difference between their achievements and the achievements of their peers and to prepare them for the transition to adulthood. We recognise the many barriers that can make it difficult for looked after children to achieve their potential and we will do our best to reduce them. We want to make a difference to children's lives by supporting their education in the best way we can, asking ourselves the question, **'Would this be good enough for my child?'**

Children 'Looked After' or children in 'Public Care' are those children:

- Who are subject to a care order (Children Act 1989 Section 31 and section 37) where the local authority shares parental responsibility with the birth parents and/or those with parental responsibility and is expected to act in partnership with them.
- Who are accommodated (Children Act 1989 Section 20) where the local authority is caring for the young person either by agreement with, or at the request of the birth parent/s or persons holding parental responsibility. Their parents retain full parental rights and must be consulted fully on all issues.

'Looked After' children or children in 'Public Care'

- May live in foster care
- May live in a residential children's home
- May live at home with their parents or extended family members

Aims

- To provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment for looked after children and young people which enables them to achieve their potential
- To ensure that looked after children and young people have access to the opportunities and support they need to achieve their potential

Principles

Our school will:

- Have high expectations and aspirations for looked after children
- Actively encourage carers and (where it is appropriate) parents to be involved in children's education
- Listen to children's views
- Respect confidentiality
- Work in partnership with other agencies and services to achieve the very best possible outcomes including the 'virtual headteacher for LAC
- Provide information and contribute to planning for children
- When we provide extra support for looked after children try to make sure that they are not made to feel different to other children in school
- Be sensitive to children's backgrounds (especially around work on families or family trees)
- Challenge negative stereotypes
- Recognise that looked after children who are members of ethnic minority groups or who have a disability may be especially vulnerable to isolation
- Ensure that looked after children are not bullied
- Consider the needs of looked after children when we review other school policies
- Ensure staff are aware of/ trained to recognise attachment and trauma related concerns

In line with the statutory guidance we will:

- Appoint a designated teacher for looked after children with suitable seniority, knowledge and experience to carry out the statutory role described in Annex 1.
Nominated person: G Hutton (headteacher)
- Provide the local authority with up-to-date contact details
- Ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training/development
- Consider (and if necessary act on) an annual report from the designated teacher covering the specific points listed in Annex 2 in order to determine:

Whether the designated teacher has sufficient time and resources to carry out their role effectively

Any training, support and development needs required to ensure the role can be carried out effectively

The extent to which school policies take account of the particular needs of looked after children

Whether the school is making the fullest use of all available resources [such as 1:1 tuition and the Pupil Premium for children in care] in order to provide the maximum opportunity for looked after children to achieve two levels of progress within a Key Stage

Make arrangements to keep ourselves informed about provision for and the attainment of looked after children on a regular basis

(*'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children - statutory guidance for school governing bodies' (DFE 2009))

We will promote relevant non-statutory guidance such as 'Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary/secondary schools' (DFE 2009) to ensure that we share the characteristics of effective schools which support children in care by:

- Doing the things we do for all children but more so
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge
- Linking each child to a key person they relate well to
- Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies
- Making things happen and seeing things through
- Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility
- Actively extending the horizons of each child
- Planning for future transitions

Annex 3 sets out the expectations on all staff and governors.

Admissions

We will adhere to the provisions of the School Admissions Code (DfE 2014) and the Derbyshire Fair Access Protocol to ensure that looked after children receive the highest priority for admission to school and are admitted swiftly to minimise disruption to children's learning.

Exclusions

In line with statutory guidance **we will take active steps to minimise the use of fixed term exclusions for looked after children and avoid permanently excluding looked after children by working with the local authority and other partners to address issues and explore alternatives.

(**Promoting the Education of Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DFE 2014)

Post Looked After (Adopted)

Our school will:

- Have high expectations and aspirations for adopted children
- Actively encourage parents to be involved in children's education
- Hold regular meetings to share information/update parents as necessary
- Listen to children's views
- Respect confidentiality
- Work in partnership with other agencies and services to achieve the very best possible outcomes for post looked after children (adopted children have the support of the local authority who placed them for adoption for up to 3 years)
- Be sensitive to children's backgrounds (especially around work on families or family trees)
- Challenge negative stereotypes
- Ensure staff are aware of/trained to recognise attachment and trauma related concerns

Annex 1

Role of the designated teacher for looked after children

Statutory guidance expects the designated teacher to be a qualified teacher with appropriate seniority, professional experience and status to provide leadership, training, information and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked after children. Where the designated teacher is not a member of the senior leadership team, a member of the team should be designated as a champion of looked after children issues to work closely with the designated teacher.

In promoting the educational achievement of looked after pupils the designated teacher will:

- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put looked after children at a disadvantage;
- make sure that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support a looked after child's learning, in particular when children first join the school;
- promote a culture in which looked after children and their teachers believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;

- promote a culture in which looked after children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked after;
- make sure that looked after children are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from support or activities and that they have access to academic focused study support;
- promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's PEP within school;
- have ultimate responsibility for leading the process of target setting for individual looked after children in school and rigorously tracking their attainment and progress;
- make sure that the PEP is an effective tool to help the school and other partners do everything possible to support the young person's educational progress.

The designated teacher should:

- be able to judge whether the teaching and learning and intervention strategies being used are working;
- know whether the young person is likely to meet the attainment targets in his or her PEP.

If the young person is not on track to meet targets, the designated teacher should agree the best way forward with him or her in order to make progress and that this is reflected in the PEP.

The designated teacher will make sure that:

- there is an agreed process in place for how the school works in partnership with others in order to review and develop the child's educational progress and how each person will contribute to driving up the child's educational achievement;

- school policies such as home-school agreements, time-keeping and attendance, homework diaries and parents' evenings are communicated to carers and social workers and, where appropriate, birth parents, so that looked after children are not disadvantaged;
- the child's teachers know the most appropriate person to contact for permissions and other day-to-day contact;
- there are positive and effective channels of communication and partnership working between the school and relevant partners to help looked after children get the most out of their school experience;
- make sure that if a looked after child moves school the designated teacher at the new school is provided with any information they need to help the transition process.

The designated teacher will be involved in any discussions about potential exclusion of looked after children and make sure that the authority which looks after the child and the child's carers are involved in such a decision.

(This is a summary of Chapters 3-5 of The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children Statutory guidance for school governing bodies (DFE 2009))

Annex 2

Annual Report

The purpose of the annual report is to consolidate the governing body's continuing role in determining the effectiveness of its arrangements to support children in care, in particular whether:

- the school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of looked after children on roll;
- the school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of looked after children;
- resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out their role effectively for the benefit of looked after children.

In line with government guidance the annual report should include:

- any workload issues for the designated teacher or others arising as a result of the number of looked after children on roll at the school and the number of local authorities which are involved;

- levels of progress made by looked after children who are currently or have been on roll within the past twelve months in relation to all children at the school (i.e. educational, social and emotional progress);
- whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked after children is different to that of all children;
- any process or planning issues arising from personal education plans (PEPs);
- whether any children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met;
- whether any have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being met through statements or other delegated funding;
- how the teaching and learning needs of looked after children are reflected in school development plans and are being met through particular interventions and resources;
- training provided for the designated teacher in order to impart knowledge and understanding about the education and well-being of looked after children to colleagues;
- work with support services;
- the impact of any of the school's policies, for example on charging for educational visits and extended school activities, on looked after children.

The governing body and school leadership team will consider the report and what needs to be done to address any issues raised by the reports in relation to:

- whether the designated teacher has sufficient time and resources to carry out their role effectively;
- any training, support and development needs required to ensure the role can be carried out effectively;
- the extent to which school policies take account of the particular needs of looked after children;
- whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available

resources, such as one-to-one tuition or the pupil premium for children in care, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for looked after children to achieve two levels of progress within a Key Stage.

To protect confidentiality the report will not mention individual children by name. (This is a summary of Chapters 2 of The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children Statutory guidance for school governing bodies (DFE 2009)).

Annex 3

Responsibilities of all staff and governors

Everyone involved in helping looked after children achieve should:

- have high expectations of looked after children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- understand how important it is to see looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, support services and how education - and the function of the PEP - fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.