

# Leadgate Primary School



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## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

We are 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.

### **Aims**

1. 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.
2. To provide a safe and secure environment which values education and beliefs in the abilities and potential of all children?
3. To bring the educational attainments of our Looked After Children nearer to those of their peers.
4. Identifying our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children. Asking the question, "Would this be good enough for my child?"

### **Objectives**

#### **Looked After Children in this school will:**

1. receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support
2. have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

#### **Teachers and other staff in this school will:**

1. 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
2. plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children

#### **The Looked After Designated Teacher and Senior Management will:**

1. identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place
2. ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
3. ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies

### **Induction**

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

1. Children and their carers will be invited into school to meet with the Head Teacher in the first instance.
2. A second visit will be arranged. During this second visit the child and carers will be shown around school, introduced to staff and introduced to their prospective class teacher and peers.
3. At least one more visit into school to spend time with their class teacher and peers will be encouraged before they are admitted full time. During this visit the child will

be supported by a carer or known adult for as long as necessary to ensure the child feels safe and secure.

4. The Head Teacher and/or the designated teacher will meet with all carers and professionals involved with the child before entry to the school
5. If the child has already been in an educational establishment then the Head Teacher will liaise with the Head Teacher of this establishment.
6. All teachers will be made aware of the child's needs and key adults in their life such as carers, support workers and other professionals.

### **Pastoral Support**

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

Miss Laura Weaver, the designated teacher for Looked After Children will:

1. ensure that staff are aware of any looked after children in school, know who the carer is, and whether parents have parental rights so they know who should receive copies of newsletters reports etc.
2. liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings
3. work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after children receive their entitlement.
4. ensure that records and plans are kept and maintained appropriately
5. provide information to the Governing Body and LA about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils on the school roll
6. secure training for the designated teacher or others as appropriate to ensure that the school can meet the needs of looked after pupils

### **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 Miss Weaver.

Each child will have their own folder containing all essential information and this will be kept in the safeguarding cabinet and locked in the office.

The information on this sheet will be shared with all members of the Senior Leadership Team.

If not already in place a Personal Education Plan will be completed at the earliest opportunity

- Miss Weaver will ensure that any arrangements recorded are adhered to by all staff involved.
- 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:

- Termly Pupil Progress Meetings
- Termly Tracking of progress and inclusion of interventions if necessary
- Termly completion of assessments
- Consultation Evenings will the class teacher will be held termly to discuss progress
- A written report will be completed in the Summer Term by the class teacher
- Their progress will also be collated and closely monitored with children who are identified as 'pupil premium'.
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors termly.
- Termly meeting will be held with carers and all professional involved with the child in order to review progress / impact / next steps of individual Personal Education Plan .
- All staff will adhere to the assessment policy.
- This information will be analysed by the Senior Leadership Team to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.
- All children in school including Looked After Children are tracked on a termly basis. Progress is tracked and interventions are arranged if required.
- Looked After Children will be tracked and their progress will be analysed against other children in school to ensure they are making progress in line with their peers.

Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

- Any absence is followed up and if absence falls below 98% carers and professionals will be invited into school to meet with the Head Teacher.
- All staff will adhere to the Attendance policy
- This information will be analysed by the attendance coordinator 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:

- All staff will adhere to the behaviour and discipline policy and procedures stated within that policy will be followed.
- Behaviour logs will be kept by the class teacher.

## **Strategies**

### **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:

- Mrs Katy Nesom (SENCO) 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
- All staff in school will adhere to the Special Needs Policy

We recognise that there are factors which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as highly as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that under-achievement 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:

- Interventions will be completed academic interventions,
  - When required professional agencies involvement will be sought by Miss Weaver
- We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark Mother's Day or to investigate family history, may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities.

### **Attendance**

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

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- The Virtual School will be alerted
- Attendance is celebrated termly by '100% Attendance Awards'
- Attendance and lateness is tracked on a weekly basis and acted upon if required.

### **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 as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.
- The staff will follow the school behaviour and discipline policy.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service and The Virtual School will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the challenging behaviour. The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with Miss Weaver
- 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.

### **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. The following strategies are in place to help Looked After Children complete homework tasks as set for their peers.

- Refer to homework policy

### **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 extra-curricular activities
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities *through Personal Education Plan meetings*

The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiative 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 senior leadership team.

### **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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Designated Teacher is Miss Laura Weaver**

The role of the Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school.

The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Designated Teacher 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
- Work closely with Social Workers and other LA staff 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 care planning meetings
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans

### **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 Designated Teacher, are enabled to carry them out.

### **The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Chair of Governors Mr Andy Plant**

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

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
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities

### **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. 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 February 2026.