

Looked after Children Policy



St Paul's CE Primary School Looked After Children Policy

Overall aims

We aim to ensure that Looked After Children excel, as we aim for all children to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and self confident young people.

Through the Christian ethos of our school we strive to ensure that all pupils are offered opportunities to experience understand and celebrate diversity.

Objectives

We will support Looked after children by:

- Ensuring an effective induction when joining our school or entering into care whilst already on the school roll;
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge;
- Ensuring that each child has a high quality Personal Education Plan;
- Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies;
- Encouraging and supporting Looked After Children to take responsibility for their learning;
- Engaging looked after children in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities;
- Prompt intervention if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance;
- Giving integrated but low profile support in school for each looked after child so that they are not made to feel different from other children;
- Planning for future transitions e.g. to secondary school.

Roles and responsibilities – see annex 1 for full detail

The Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children in this school is Sarah Hughes. The designated teacher in this school is Trudy Taylor, Deputy Headteacher.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All Looked After Children must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a

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shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping children in care to achieve and enjoy.

Review meetings should involve the young person, carers, social worker, teacher and others where appropriate.

Pupil Premium Plus

From April 2014, schools can receive the pupil premium funding for children adopted from care or who left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) on or after 30 December 2005. Schools can also claim the pupil premium for children who left care under a Residence Order (RO) on or after 14 October 1991.

This school is committed to using this funding to support accelerated progress, in order to narrow the gap and improve outcomes for all children who are or have been, Looked After.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Looked After Children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the school or to care, carers and the child will meet with the Children and Families Officer, Deb Edwards. The CFO will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan, This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance. At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities.

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that Looked After Children enjoy as many extra curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Leaving Arrangements

When a Looked After Child leaves our school we will ensure they receive the necessary emotional support and the provide the next school with all the information and paperwork to allow for a smooth transition.

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Annex 1 - Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Governing Body:

- The governing body will ensure that the designated teacher and the named governor undertake appropriate training;
- Ensure that the designated teacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of LAC on roll;
- The school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of LAC.

The role of the Head teacher/ Designated teacher

- to ensure that, in partnership with the Governing body, CFO has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of children in care;
- oversee the development of the policy on children in care;
- evaluate the standards and achievement of LAC and report these termly to the governing body and discuss them at School effectiveness meetings;
- ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support children in care.

The role of the Children and Families Offices in relation to Looked After Children at our school:

The CFO will:

- promote the educational achievement of every Looked After Child on the school's roll;
- 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, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support Looked After Children's learning;
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the school;
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in care and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer;
- act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;

The role of all staff involved in supporting Looked After Children:

- ensure that all Looked After Children are made to feel welcome and included;
- 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;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a Looked After Child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children;
- understand how important it is to see Looked After Children as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a Looked After Child's status;
- understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential

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Annex 2 – Definitions and complaints procedure

Looked After Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- (i) children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (ii) children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- (iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- (iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A Looked After Child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

Legal Framework

From 1 September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools are required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) to appoint a designated teacher (DT) to promote the educational achievement of children in care who are on the school roll. This policy follows the statutory guidance for school governing bodies outlined in “The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Looked After Children” 2009 .

Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Children and Families Officer, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Head teacher, in which case the complaint will go straight to the chair of governors.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person’s education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head teacher’s response.

Date of review October 2018