



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN & PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Category: Non-Statutory	Approved by: TLC (Teaching Learning & Care) Committee
Approved: July 2006	Next Approval due: July 2007
Initial Review by: Head Teacher & Safeguarding Lead Governor	Formal Review by: TLC Committee
Linked Policies: Equalities Policy, Curriculum Policy, Assessment Policy, Behaviour Policy.	

Our Christian Vision:

Built on the rock of Christian faith, we work as a community to create an environment which enables all to flourish. Jesus welcomed everyone and we embrace diversity, celebrating our different gifts and successes. Like St Peter, we are motivated by our values, learn from our mistakes and strive for the best outcome for all.

Who are Looked After Children (LAC)?

Children and young people become 'Looked After' if they have been taken into Care by the local authority, either via a legal route under The Children's Act 1989 or where a voluntary agreement has been reached with the birth family. Most LAC (Looked After Children) will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth family.

Who are previously Looked After Children?

Previously looked after children are those who are no longer looked after by a local authority because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. Woolhampton CE Primary School believes that in partnership with West Berkshire District Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of looked after and previously looked after children.

Aims of the policy

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our looked after children and previously looked after children and give them access to every opportunity, in order to help them achieve their potential and to enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our looked after children and previously looked after children.

In pursuit of this policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for looked after children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.

The Designated Teacher is: ***Mrs D Perrin***

- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of looked after children in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.

The nominated governor is: ***Mrs K Mitchell (Safeguarding Governor)***

- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available so that they attend the Designated Teacher Network meetings and any specific training on looked after children as appropriate to ensure that they have the most up to date information on supporting looked after children.
- Review all policies and procedures regularly to ensure that they adequately address the needs of looked after children and that those children have access to all aspects of education, particularly with regard to admissions, curriculum, extra support and extracurricular activities.
- Have a clear and consistent plan for attendance at all looked after children Personal Educational Plan (PEP) meetings to ensure coherence and efficiency in planning and attaining targets. The members of staff attending need to be free or made free from teaching commitments to attend PEP meetings.
- Ensure PEP meetings will be called every 6 months (twice per academic year) and more regularly if required.
- Ensure papers required for each PEP meeting will be available prior to the start of the meeting or there will be reading time at the start of the meeting if new papers are tabled.
- Ensure that during the PEP meeting, targets and actions agreed will be available and recorded on the electronic PEP platform. Copies of the PEP record will be sent to the carer(s) after the meeting.
- Arrange that, unless otherwise agreed, the child should attend all or part of the meeting and should be released from lessons to do so.
- Ensure that following a PEP meeting, targets and actions agreed will be available and recorded on the electronic PEP platform. Copies of the PEP record will be sent to the carer(s) after the meeting.
- Ensure that vital information raised at PEP meetings that have an impact on learning will be circulated to other teaching and support staff on a 'need to know' basis as agreed at the meeting and, in best practice, agreed with the child or young person concerned .
- Discuss issues relating to attendance and/or exclusions with the Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that there is as little disruption to a child's education as possible. When considering a permanent exclusion, a discussion will be held with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for any looked after and previously looked after children in the school.
- Maintain an up to date record of all looked after and previously looked after children who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or Section 20 accommodation;
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential;

- Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number;
- Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent and carer or key worker in children's home;
- SEN Code of Practice – School Action/School Action Plus where appropriate;
- Child Protection information when appropriate;
- Baseline information, including an assessment of preferred learning styles and all test results;
- Attendance figures;
- Exclusions

- Ensure that there is a PEP for each child to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Statement of Special Education Need, and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.

- Ensure that someone attends Children's Services Reviews on each child and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.

- Liaise with the Virtual School on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of LAC.

- Provide the Virtual School with termly attainment data to enable the Virtual School Headteacher to have clear tracking data for all looked after children.

- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.

- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when looked after or previously looked after children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy including access to 1:1 tuition.

- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about looked after children where and when appropriate.

- Ensure that looked after or previously looked after children along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.

- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of looked after or previously looked after children

- Report to the Governing Body annually on the academic performance; attendance and exclusions of the looked after children who are on the roll of the school.

- Ensure that the school evaluates the performance data for all looked after or previously looked after children and that it is recorded in the school's self evaluation documentation.

All staff will:

- Have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of looked after or previously looked after children (as with all children at the school).

- Be familiar with the guidance on looked after or previously looked after children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.

- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a looked after or previously looked after children is experiencing difficulty. These may be academic; pastoral; behaviour and/or attendance issues.

All governors will:

- Ensure that admission criteria prioritise looked after or previously looked after children, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for looked after or previously looked after children
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for looked after or previously looked after children
- Nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body.
- For child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.
- Ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after or previously looked after children equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school;
 - The National Curriculum and public examinations;
 - Additional educational support where this is needed;
 - Extracurricular activities.
- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after or previously looked after children
- Ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place in the school even if there are no looked after or previously looked after children on roll at the time .

Confidentiality

Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Exclusions

It is recognised that looked after children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a looked after child is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of looked after children. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with looked after children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs. Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those looked after children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

Support and resources

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for looked after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Home-school liaison

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable looked after children to achieve their potential. Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Admission arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements looked after children may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognises that looked after children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise looked after children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the looked after children including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service); Youth Offending Teams.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. The school is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

Policy Monitoring and review

The designated Committee of the Governing Body monitors this policy annually. This Committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full Governing Body, as necessary, if the Policy needs modification.

Additional Information

Virtual School Headteacher

The service is led by the Virtual School Headteacher, who maintains an overview of the Virtual School and the local authority's strategic direction. Key responsibilities are:

- To support CYP in the care of WB District Council in educational and preschool settings within the district or outside of the area and to offer support to those in the care of other authorities but placed in West Berkshire schools or settings.
- To raise the educational attainment and achievement of looked after children and other previously looked after children.
- To ensure that looked after children have equal access to educational, training and employment opportunities.
- To ensure that looked after children participate and progress within a wide range of educational and broader activity within and extending beyond schools.
- To ensure that the services are responsive to and informed by the voice and needs of looked after children and those from other vulnerable groups.

Virtual School Consultants

Virtual School Consultants for looked after children support children and young people from preschool right through to the end of statutory education. Their aim is to support the academic outcomes of looked after children by:

- Chairing and minuting Personal Education Planning Meetings
- Participating in the Pre 16 Life Chances Team
- Contributing to the training programme for foster carers and social workers
- Providing guidance and training on issues relating to looked after children, e.g. separation, trauma and loss, the significance of early attachments, etc
- Advising social workers on the education of looked after children
- Signposting services to other professionals.

The pupil premium funding for looked after children

The Pupil Premium Plus grant is to support looked after children (adopted children are also eligible for the Pupil Premium but this funding is not managed by the local authority). The PPP grant **MUST** be used to provide additional support for looked after children to reach their full potential. It can be used to support academic, social and emotional needs, as long as these are linked to the pupil's progress. The use of the Pupil Premium for looked after children will be discussed at the Personal Education Plan meetings where the support can be identified and evaluated for impact. The Virtual School team will provide advice and guidance on the use of the Pupil Premium. It is a requirement of the grant that the use of the funds is published on the school website with a commentary on the impact of the funding on a child's educational outcomes. The child **MUST NOT** be able to be identified, so schools should be careful about the information that is made available to meet this requirement.