



Fishergate Primary School

Looked After Child Policy

The objective of this policy is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of children in public care. Raising levels of achievement and maintaining the welfare has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

Legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of looked after children.

Definition:

The term “looked after” was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child’s welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full time basis.

Furthermore, the term “looked after”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, which has been adopted by the DfES in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”.

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all looked after children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of looked after children
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of looked after children

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place.

- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, extra-curricular activities and enjoy the school experience fully in line with the Fishergate Primary School ethos.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the LA's Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education and Skills / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavor to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible potential, academically, socially and emotionally.

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 Leadership Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Designated Teachers, are enabled to carry them out.

The role of the designated teacher for Looked After Children

The Designated Teacher Regulations 2009) required that the person designated is a qualified teacher, working as a teacher at the school, or a head teacher or acting head teacher of the school. **Lisa Solanki**, the designated teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school.

The designated teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked after children of the school by:

- maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
 - ensuring that all staff are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
 - acting as an advocate for looked after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances
 - 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
- Is a member of the safeguarding and child protection team

The designated teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children and will:

- have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after
- maintain records regarding all looked after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- monitor the educational progress of all looked after children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern

The designated teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's PEP
- playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked after children
- helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP).
- Sharing assessment data with the virtual school.

The designated teacher will monitor each child's progress and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues. This will be the responsibility of the class teacher with support of the class teaching assistant or ELSA, if appropriate.
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- by supporting each child to contribute fully to any review and will record their contributions exactly as given regardless of the relevance to the questions. We feel it is important to establish the child's point of view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. We also feel it is important to ensure that a Social Worker, Teacher or carer prepares the child for situations in which they may be questioned about home.
- As the SENDCo Lisa Solanki will review support in school and where appropriate, by requesting support from outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a looked after child requires additional academic or social, emotional or mental health support
- by working closely with the class teachers to ensure all looked after children with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- by having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions
- by ensuring all looked after children are encouraged to take a full and active part of their learning and development

Assessment and tracking

The assessment and tracking of Looked After will include the following school procedures:

- Termly Pupil Progress Meetings

- Termly Tracking of progress and inclusion of interventions if necessary
- Termly completion of Classroom monitor data / other appropriate assessment
- Consultation Evenings with the class teacher will be held in the Autumn and Spring Term to discuss progress. A written report will be completed in the Summer Term by the class teacher
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors termly
- Termly meetings will be held with carers and all professionals 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 half termly basis. Progress is tracked and interventions are arranged if required.
- All children including Looked After Children have aspirational progress targets set at the beginning of the year.

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:

- Attendance data is collated on a weekly basis for all children in school including Looked After Children. This information is analysed. Any absence is followed up and if absence falls below 90% carers and professional will be contacted by the Headteacher.

Extra-Curricular Activities

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 Teachers will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities
- The Designated Teachers will liaise with the child, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities through Personal Education Plan meetings

The Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority and the school but should involve all those with an interest in the child's education including

- The child/young person
- The social worker
- The designated teacher
- The carer
- The parent (where appropriate)

Effective and high quality PEPs should:

- be a comprehensive and enduring record of the child's experience, progress and achievement (academic and otherwise);

- be linked to information in other education plans, including a statement of special educational needs and Personal Provision maps;
- identify developmental and educational needs (short and long term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
- set short term outcomes, including progress monitoring against each of the areas identified against development and educational needs;
- set long term plans and educational outcomes and aspirations (e.g. in relation to public examinations, further and higher education, work experience and career plans and aspirations);
- document identified actions for specific individuals intended to support the achievement of agreed outcomes;
- identify whether the child is eligible for the Pupil Premium and if so how the allowance will be used to support the targets set in the PEP

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Arranging for the child or young person to complete their section of the PEP, which gives an opportunity for the child to have their views taken into account and valued.
- Completing the sections of the form which require information relating to attainment, progress, target setting, attendance, support needs and school interventions Identifying those education colleagues who will have a contribution to make to the meeting

The Social Worker is responsible for:

- Consulting with carers and parents who should be encouraged to attend the meeting as they have a key role to play as the first line of support for the child's education
- Completing the sections of the form which require information relating to personal details, care details, responsibilities

Further information on the PEP process will be provided on request.

The named Governor with a special responsibility for Looked after Children.

The name of the LAC governor is Jackie Hudson who is also responsible for Safeguarding.

The role of the governor:

- ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- oversee the development of the policy on looked after children
- be responsible for all systems to support looked after children.

To be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked after children have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum
- Public examinations
- Additional educational support
- Extracurricular activities

Liaison with Outside Agencies:

School and the all agencies involved in maintaining the welfare of the child should endeavour to co-ordinate their meetings, e.g. to have an Annual Review of Statement combined with a Statutory Care Review.

School and Children and other agencies will need to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances e.g. if school is considering an exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues. 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

- 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 Education & Health Care Plans 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.

Admission Arrangements:

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the City of York Council's published admission criteria.

On arrival at Fishergate Primary School, the child and carers will meet with the designated teacher and their class teacher. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school and a meeting will be held with whoever has parental responsibility. This will provide information for the Personal Education Plan.

In 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. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved then procedures as details in the Fishergate Primary School Complaints policy will be followed.

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