



**CASTLEFORD
PARK JUNIOR ACADEMY**

Looked After Children Policy

Castleford Park Junior Academy

May 2018

Review Date : May 2020

Looked After Children Policy



Rationale

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.

Raising levels of achievement 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.

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” 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”.

Legal Framework

Recent 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. (See executive summary of latest statutory guidance in appendix one)

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement, reducing exclusion and ensuring a high standard of attendance 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

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- the school has a coherent policy for looked after children
- the school’s policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfES guidelines
- the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- the Governing body receives an annual report

The Head Teacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher, ensuring they receive appropriate training
- oversee policies and systems for looked after children
- report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school
 - Any workload issues related to the number of LAC on roll
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group and levels of progress made; compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils, the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - Whether any LAC children are identified as more able, or SEND and how their needs are being met
 - the number of complaints
 - Any process or planning issues arising from PEPs
 - Training that has been provided for the designated teacher
 - The impact of any changes to school policies/new policies on LAC

The Designated Teacher

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, through appropriate training, 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

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

- 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
- inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP).

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

- by meeting with the looked after child to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role
- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues (this maybe the class teacher in a primary school)
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- by requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a looked after child requires additional support
- by working closely with the SENCO 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 made to feel a part of the school environment

Training for staff

Many Looked After Children have attachment difficulties. Staff –both teaching and non-teaching –have training to help them spot signs of attachment difficulties and they are given support to consider the most appropriate responses that will support the child in the best way possible.

Some signs that staff may become aware of include:

Learning barriers	Best Response
So alert and hyper-vigilant to everything around them that they do not always hear the teacher's instructions and subsequently struggle with their work.	Use of a fiddle toy and exit plan from classroom if needed. Use of visual modelling and clear examples in order to aid the development of independent learning.
Finds it unbearable to be wrong/make mistakes. Has very low self-esteem and believes themselves to be rubbish at everything – to the extent of refusing to try despite positive encouragement	Emotional coaching – particularly about the importance of resilience and self-esteem Regular praise and celebration of achievement
Finds relationships with adults difficult and sometimes frightening, so it can be hard for the child to accept and ask for help	Special consideration of transition arrangements Designated mentor who can build a trusting relationship Encouragement that a pupil should share any worries that can be overcome together
Steals items from peers regularly (from trivial items to food from lunchboxes)	Transparency of school systems and reassurance of clear and fair consequences.
Continually interrupts the teacher - asking lots of questions and making lots of statements	Short term targets in place to build better learning habits. Positive relationships and celebration of achievement where good learning habits are displayed. Relationship with a designated mentor who can support the development of better learning habits.
Often looks sad, sullen or sulky but has no words to describe their feelings/denies that anything is wrong	Emotional coaching – particularly about the importance of resilience and self-esteem Regular praise and celebration of achievement
Tells constant and fantastical lies with seemingly no idea that they are unreal. Especially noticeable when the child has done something wrong – taking the form of total denial/knowledge of what has happened.	Regular fair and transparent communication both with carers and peers at school. Consequences where needed, based on the facts. Opportunity for the pupil to share their thoughts and feelings wherever needed.
Does not appear to respond to school behaviour management strategies, appearing not to care/unable to improve	Flexibility with school behaviour policy, adapting to find a way that best supports the individual. High standards expected – in line with other pupils though – and communicated to demonstrate belief in the pupil.
Regularly has extreme behavioural difficulties at home after school, even though school behaviour is different	Very regular communication between school and home and an opportunity for outlet at school, before home time, to reduce behaviour at home.
Pupils expect to be 'bad' people or not to be good at new things so might struggle to be resilient/take risks in school	Independent learning culture prevalent in school for all pupils.
Can be hyper sensitive to things that appear to evidence their negative self-image. Experience high levels of shame which can cause fight/flight/freeze reaction. Pupils can feel exposed and want to hide/react with rage whilst feeling alienated from others.	Outlet for communication about feelings and to build positive self-image. An exit strategy to help them leave the classroom with dignity and a safe place where they can feel safe and return to a calm, emotional state.

Although each child is individual and this will be the primary consideration when considering appropriate response, research regarding best practice will help inform staff of what this might be. All pupils are considered special and unique in our school and as such, are required to conform to the highest expectations we have of them – in order to achieve their potential. Where pupils struggle to do this, we will help them wherever possible.

Personal Education Plans

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 also essential to ensure what is needed takes place

The PEP will consider:

- the child's strengths, weaknesses and interests
- developmental, educational and pastoral needs
- future plans, and how these can be supported
- issues arising for the child
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

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

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

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.)

School Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

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 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.

Any issue 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.

Monitoring and Review:

Written by Miss Law May 2018

Review Date: May 2020

Signed  _____

Date: May 2018

Miss K. Law Headteacher

Signed _____

Date: May 2018

Mr J. Dossey Chair of Governors

Appendix One

Executive summary

This executive summary is an 'aide memoir' of responsibilities of governing bodies and designated teachers appointed by them to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. It should not be read as a substitute for the full guidance which should be fully understood by all governing bodies and designated teachers.

1. Statutory 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 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children who are on the school roll.

2. The role of the governing body

- The governing body must ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training (section 20(2) of the 2008 Act).
- As a minimum governors must consider an annual report from the designated teacher which contains the information described in section 2.10 of this guidance.
- The governing body and school leadership team should consider the report and act on any issues it raises so as to support the designated teacher and maximise the impact of the role.

3. The role of the designated teacher within the school

- The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked after children learn and achieve.
- The designated teacher should:
 - promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how looked after children learn
 - make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
 - be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning
 - make sure that looked after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
 - have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school.

4. The role of the designated teacher in developing the personal education plan (PEP)

- All looked after children must have a PEP as part of their overall care plan. The PEP should be sent to the designated teacher when the child becomes looked after or joins the school.
- The PEP is a shared document which includes the information that everyone needs to help their conversations, planning and the delivery of strategies required to make sure the child gets the support and provision needed to succeed.
- The designated teacher leads on how the PEP is used as a tool in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored. S/he makes sure that it is updated and available in time for the local authority review of the child's wider care plan. For each statutory review of the care plan the PEP must include:
 - any new information about progress towards education targets since the last PEP review
 - information about what has not been taken forward.
- The designated teacher has a key role in helping looked after children make a smooth transition to their new school or college, including making sure there are effective arrangements in place for the speedy transfer of information.

5. The relationship of the designated teacher to others beyond the school

- The designated teacher has a key role in making sure there is a central point of initial contact within the school who can manage the process of how the school engages with others (e.g. social workers, virtual school heads), works in a joined up way and minimises disruption to the child's education.
- The designated teacher should make sure that:
 - there is an agreed process in place for how the school works with others in focusing on how everyone contributes to promoting the child's educational achievement;
 - school policies (e.g. around Home School Agreements) are communicated to social workers and carers;
 - the school does everything possible to maximise educational stability for the child, especially by finding ways of sharing information through the PEP and in providing advice to the local authority about the impact of disrupting education.