Water Orton Primary School



Policy for Looked After/Post Looked After Children

INTRODUCTION

This Policy is written following the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, issued under sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. This means that the governing body and the designated staff member must have regard to it when promoting the educational attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Who are our Looked After children?

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' (LAC) is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- a previously looked-after child (PLAC) is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

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

• children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents
• children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order
• children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
• children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

The Governing Body of Water Orton Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Governing Body recognises that, nationally, there is educational underachievement of LAC and PLAC, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance, "The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children." and "The Children and Young Persons Act 2008." The Children Act places a duty to safeguard Looked After children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential".

1. Doing the things they do for all young people but more so

2. Balancing high levels of support with real challenge

3. Skilfully linking each young person to a key person they relate well to

4. Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships

5. Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies

6. Making things happen and seeing things through 7. Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility

8. Actively extending the horizons of each young person

9. Planning for future transitions

The Guidance states two key measures:

To ensure that a Designated Teacher is nominated in every school
To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all LAC

This Governing Body is committed to ensuring that the Designated Teacher and staff at Water Orton Primary School are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key personnel

The designated teacher for Looked After Children (LAC and PLAC) is Emma Smith (Headteacher)
Contact details: email: admin2618@welearn365.com Phone: 0121 747 2851

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children – LAC/PLAC - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

• a high level of disruption and change in school placements
• lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
• inconsistent or no attention paid to homework

This may result in:

• poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
• under-achievement in further and higher education.

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act") places a duty on the governing body of maintained schools to designate a member of staff (the 'designated teacher') as having responsibility to promote the educational achievement of Looked after children who are registered pupils at the school. This includes those aged between 16 and 18. The Governing Body and all the staff at Water Orton Primary School are committed to ensuring that all LAC achieve, are challenged and enjoy school. In doing so we all have key roles and responsibilities:

The Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009 (the Regulations) require that:

The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised. In promoting the educational achievement of looked after pupils the designated teacher should:

- 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 a looked after child's learning. Particular account should be taken of

the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what he or she can achieve;
- promote a culture in which Looked After Children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- promote a culture in which Looked After Children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked after;
- make sure the school makes full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of Looked After Children and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there;
- make sure that Looked after children are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and that they have access to academic focused study support;
- promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers. In particular, they should make sure that carers understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary. Further information on the role of the designated teacher and the PEP is set out in the guidelines mentioned at the beginning of this policy.
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student.

The designated person will report on:

- the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a PEP
- their attendance compared to other students
- their attainment compared to other students
- the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
- the destinations of students who leave the school

Good practice for all staff:

The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how Looked after children learn and achieve. Everyone involved in helping Looked after children achieve should:

- 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, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- understand how important it is to see Looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, virtual school heads (or equivalent) in local authorities and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care

Good practice for the Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC. The appointment of a designated teacher in accordance with the Regulations is a core function of the governing body.

The guidance referred to earlier sets out what the school governing body collectively will need to do in order to fulfil its duty under section 20 of the 2008 Act and the Regulations.

Good practice suggests that the Local Authority will:

- lead on the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC
- ensure that the education of this group is as good as that provided for every other student
- ensure that LAC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care
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- make sure that every LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate

Review

The Headteacher, Nominated Teacher for LAC/PLAC and Governing Body will review this policy every annually in consultation with staff.

- Written by: Emma Smith
- Written – March 2021
- Agreed by Governing Body: March 2021
- Reviewed March 2022 March 2023 March 2024 March 2025 March 2026
- [redacted]

Next Review March 2027