



Charlestown
Primary School



Children in Care Policy

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School or Trust Policy	School

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School Policy for Children In Care (previously 'Looked After Children')

“An educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. Effective schools are educationally inclusive schools. This shows, not only in their performance, but also in their ethos and their willingness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. This does not mean treating all pupils in the same way. Rather it involves taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs.”

The above quote is taken from 'Evaluating Educational Inclusion – Guidance for Inspectors and Schools' (DfES 2000) and forms the rationale for this policy.

We are also aware that Children In Care constitute a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taken into Public Care, but that they are also individuals and members of other groups. We will take this into account when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatization.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Children In Care, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

Objectives

Children In Care in this school will

- receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support
- have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

Teachers and other staff in this school will

- receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and psychological well-being of Children In Care and use this to guide their interactions with them

- plan for and meet the individual needs of Children In Care

The Co-ordinator for Children In Care and Senior Management will

- identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place
- ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
- ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies

1. Induction

To ensure a supportive and sympathetic induction for Looked After Children admitted to our school, the following arrangements are in place

e.g. ensuring that the families and children are given a tour of the school, supported with settling in to their class on their first day (and if necessary for the first few days). Calls will be made to inform the families of how the children are settling in. A 'buddy' or friend is assigned to each child within their class so they have a familiar face to know more quickly. If necessary TIS support is put in place to assist the transition into our school.

2. Pastoral Support

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support the following arrangements are in place

The Assistant HT will be the person who ensure that these activities are in place and all children are given the right support.

3. Information

- The Looked After Co-ordinator will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the Looked After Co-ordinator will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.
- Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who

are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Looked After Co-ordinator of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information, to be determined by *(The AHT)*

Having liaised with any previous settings and the family, the AHT will ensure that appropriate provision is in place to support transition into school and a successful induction into school life.

- The Looked After Co-ordinator will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is in order to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school. The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the young person.
- Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:

The AHT will work with the child's class teacher to ensure that the assessments are accurate and that provision is effective. They will liaise with relevant agencies (e.g. social workers etc.) to ensure that any external provision compliments that which is happening in school.

- This information will be analysed by *(normally the Looked After Co-ordinator)* to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.

This is carried out at the regular pupil progress conference meetings and more regularly if there is a SEND

- Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

In addition, we use Mental health Surveys (with parental permission) and pupil conferencing to gain a better understanding of the lived experience of the child in order to improve the offer for them.

- This information will be analysed by *the AHT* to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.

- Information about the behaviour of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

Ongoing monitoring against the school's behaviour policy and procedures. Behaviour reports on MyConcern and liaison with families about sanctions if needed, including (as a last result) internal or external fixed-term exclusions.

- This information will be analysed by The Looked After Co-ordinator to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion so early intervention can take place.

4. Strategies

4.1 Curriculum

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- *The AHT* will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff
- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties
- Talk to the child

If necessary, the SENDCo will be involved and any necessary screening and/or accessing external advice will be undertaken.

We recognise that there are factors which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as highly as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that under-achievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results. If progress is not as could be expected

Use of TIS support, peer mentoring and identifying an emotionally available adult for the child to work with are examples of how we seek to address any under achievement which is not SEND related.

We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark Mother's Day or to investigate family history, may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities.

4.2 Attendance

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by *the AHT* to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- We will continue to work with the School Education Welfare Officer who will be involved fully in planning and delivering strategies to improve attendance, e.g. arranging meetings to set attendance targets and investigating arranging support with transport etc.

4.3 Behaviour

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by *the AHT* as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.

It may be necessary to modify the behaviour procedures to meet the child's needs, but this will be monitored and handled extremely sensitively.

- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, LBSS and Education Access will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the problem behaviour. The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with *the AHT*.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring we will ensure that the provision is as appropriate as possible and all other sanctions are used before a fixed term external exclusion is used. E.g. moving to another room or area of the school, loss of part of break/lunchtimes, internal exclusions etc.

4.4 Homework

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete homework, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so. The following strategies are in place to help Looked After Children complete homework tasks as set for their peers.

The class teacher will liaise with the family to ensure they have appropriate resources to support with homework activities, including access to IT etc., and support with using MS Teams.

4.5 Extra-Curricular Activities

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school-based activities because of poor relationships with their peers, for example. 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 Looked After Co-ordinator will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities *termly when the AHT oversees the lists of clubs' provision.*
- The Looked After Co-ordinator will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities. *This could be as part of a PEP meeting, but usually through school-home communication.*
- The Looked After Co-ordinator will liaise with LA support services such as Education Access or the Study Support Co-ordinator to develop strategies for increasing the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities if their uptake is shown to be low.

The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiative will be monitored and evaluated by

- Collection and analysis of information
- Discussion with school staff, carers, Social Workers and staff from LA Support Services, both informally and during meetings eg those set up to write Personal Education Plans
- Discussions with Looked After Children
- Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of school strategies lies with *the AHT.*

5. Liaison With Outside Agencies

To ensure that all those involved in the education and care of Looked After Children work together in their best interests, the Looked After Co-ordinator will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives
- 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 Statements of SEN 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.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Looked After Co-ordinator is *Liz Burnett/Jess Poole*

The role of the Looked After Co-ordinator is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. For this reason the person appointed will be given appropriate training and time to ensure the role is fulfilled successfully for the benefit of all LAC.

The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Looked After Co-ordinator are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Looked After Co-ordinator will

- 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
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register
- Work closely with Social Workers and other SSD staff to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans which will inform Care Plans
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to SSD care planning meetings
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans

6.2 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 Management Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Looked After Co-ordinator, are enabled to carry them out.

6.3 The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is *Lynne Dewar*

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis

- The number of Looked After pupils in the school
- A comparison of test scores for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Pupil destinations

The named governor must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory assessments
- Careers guidance
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities

7. Evaluation

The general success and appropriateness of this policy will be evaluated annually. In addition, we will monitor and analyse the impact of this policy on pupils, staff and parents of different ethnic groups. The results of the evaluation will be passed to the school Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children before being presented to the Governing Body.