

St. John's C of E (VA) Primary School



'Looked After Children' Policy

Date: November 2018
Frequency of review 3 years
Committee responsible Personnel

The Governing Body of St John's C of E (VA) Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This Governing Body recognises that, nationally, there is a considerable gap in the educational achievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2010), Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 and The Children and Social Work Act. 2017.

Aim

To provide a safe and secure environment that values education and promotes the abilities and potential of all children.

To bring the educational achievements of our Looked After Children (LAC) nearer to those of their peers.

To identify our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children; Asking the question 'would this be good enough for my child?'

To ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After Children are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.

To ensure that pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

To ensure that Looked After Children take as full a part as possible in all school activities.

Context and Rationale

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. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)

- 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 (section 21).

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.

All these groups are said to be '**Looked After Children**' (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Children who are subject to special guardianship or adopted are not looked after.

The Governing Body of St John's C of E (VA) Primary School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively.

- A Senior Leader as Designated Teacher for LAC.
- Personal Education Plans for all LAC.
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect LAC.
- Effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group.

Responsibility of the Head Teacher

- Identify a designated teacher for LAC, whose role is set out below. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated teacher not be available to undertake these legal duties.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admissions progress, attendance, exclusions and attainment of LAC and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related policies.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

Name of Nominated Governor: Mrs Jo Iyashere

The Governing Body will:

- Identify a Nominated Governor for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher;
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs of all its LAC regardless of the originating authority;
- With the Head Teacher, ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to LAC;
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC;

- Review annually the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

Name of Designated Teacher: The school Inclusion Manager (Mrs Jane Wright (maternity leave covered by Mrs Vicky Spink))

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for LAC;
- ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer. Note will be made of any specific requirements, including care status.
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible (at least within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, which take place within 28 days of becoming looked after, 3 months after the first review and then at least, every 6 months; a flow chart showing the PEP completion is found at the end of this policy.
- arrange for the child to be supported to complete their section of the PEP, which gives an opportunity for the child to have their views taken into account and valued..
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- Maintain a register / database of all LAC in the School, to include
 - the name of the social worker, home borough, area office and contact details
 - status i.e. care order or accommodated
 - type of placement i.e. residential, foster, respite
 - daily contact information e.g. name of carer / parent / key worker in residential home
- ensure that the status of LAC is identified within the School's management information system to track academic and other progress and target support appropriately;
- prepare reports for Governor's meetings to include
 - the number of LAC on role and confirmation that they have a PEP
 - their attendance compared to other pupils
 - their attainment (SATs and teacher assessments compared to other pupils)
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as the needs of LAC;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.

- encourage LAC to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded;
- work in partnership with Croydon Virtual School or the virtual school of the borough from which they are placed to provide progress data as requested.

Roles and Responsibilities of all Staff

- ensure that any child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child looked after's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC;
- positively promote the self-esteem of LAC

Admission to School

Looked After Children are the highest priority on our admission criteria and we expect them to have a planned admission to our School. We will seek to admit these children after meeting the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals, to identify needs, support mechanisms and allow the child to prepare to enter the School.

Allocation of Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

We will work with Croydon Virtual School and Virtual Schools for students from other Local Authorities, to ensure that LAC receive the full support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Confidentiality

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

Training

The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

The Governing Body will ensure staff receive appropriate training to fully undertake their roles with relation to LAC, allocating resources and time.

Further Information

Support for Looked After Children by Croydon is provided by the Croydon's Virtual School. They may also be able to give advice about Looked After Children by other boroughs in the school.

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Further guidance can be found in

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2010)

The role and responsibilities of a designated teacher for looked after children – Statutory Guidance for school governing bodies (2009)

***Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion.**

Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school) within 48 hours of starting at school

Social Worker initiates the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting. A copy of the form is sent to the school (ideally electronically) to enable completion of educational data prior to the meeting

PEP meeting takes place within 20 school days of child becoming looked after or entering school. This should involve the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person. A date is set for the next PEP meeting in 6 months time.

Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.



***Note: This process is for Children who are looked after by Croydon- other authorities may have slightly different procedures on PEP completion as well as a different PEP format.**