Richard Lee Primary

Looked After Children Policy

Local Level Policy

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Part of the Castle Phoenix Trust
Leading Learning and Excelling Together

School Policy for 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 the 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 Looked After Children constitute a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taking 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 Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

Objectives

Looked After Children 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 Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them
- plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children

The Looked After Co-ordinator and Senior Leaders 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, our designated LAC Teacher, Miss Azra Foric, will ensure a smooth transition. She will meet in person or vis TEAMs/telephone with the designated LAC teacher from the child's previous school to ensure a thorough handover of information. She will ensure that we have named contacts from the Local Authority including social worker details and foster carer details. Our designated LAC teacher and our Learning Mentor or Pastoral Leader will visit the child in their current setting to begin building relationships to support the transition process and to share as much information as possible with the child about Richard Lee (class, teacher names etc) We will also strongly encourage a visit to the school prior to the start date.

2. Pastoral Support

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

Our Pastoral Leader and/or Learning Mentor will regularly meet with the child to check in. This provided opportunity to understand how the child is feeling and ensures that they have the opportunity to share their views, thoughts and feelings. Our Pastoral Leader and/or Learning Mentor will also regularly liaise with the lead social worker, foster carer and will attend LAC meetings on behalf of the school. Our Pastoral Leader will also be responsible for gathering the child's views prior to each PEP Meeting.

Our SENDCO Assistant will regularly work with the child/children to support them with their learning and progress with a focus upon the targets set out in their Personal Education Plan (PEP) There will also be specific activities and sessions to encourage the development of the child's well-being and emotional development if this is required and agreed.

Our designated LAC Teacher, Miss Azra Foric, will have overall responsibility for coordinating the support for the child. She will regularly liaise with the Pastoral Leader, SENDCO Assistant and class teacher. She will be responsible for creating the Personal Education Plan (PEP) using the online system and will arrange and lead the termly meetings to share the information and gather the views of everyone involved with the child. During these meetings it is agreed how the additional pupil premium funds are used to support the progress of the child.

3. Information

- The designated LAC teacher 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 designated LAC teacher 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 designated LAC teacher, 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 designated LAC teacher
- All information regarding the Looked After child will be recorded on our secure CPOMs system including information regarding parental responsibility, arrangements for parents' evenings, sharing of school letters and reports etc
- 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 termly, in line with the data collection of all pupils. This will be shared on an individual level with key stakeholders as part of the termly PEP meetings.(Foster carers, parents, social workers) As a collective, attainment and progress information of all LAC children will be shared and reported annually at the end of the academic year with our Trust, governors and members of staff.
- This information will be analysed by the designated LAC teacher to measure the attainment and progress of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole. The termly PEP process will enable the data to be regularly analysed and considerations to be made about how to further support as a result of the current picture.
- Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected by the designated LAC teacher as part of the PEP process on a termly basis with information being recorded on the EPEP system. A full attendance register will be brought and referenced during the meeting. This information will be analysed by the designated LAC teacher and the Education Welfare Officer 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 recorded on our CPOMs system by members of the Inclusion or teaching team.
- 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 designated LAC teacher will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff
- The SENDCo (also the designated LAC teacher) will consider any factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties. If there are worries about potential SEN then these will be considered and appropriate action and intervention will take place. External agency support may be requested. (Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language etc)
- A member of the Inclusion Team will talk to the child and ensure their views are gathered
- Information sharing will be critical and social workers, foster carers and parents will always be kept fully up to date and informed

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 additional interventions will be considered and the learning mentor will work closely with the class teacher to ensure suitable support and intervention focused on key gaps in learning or areas of difficulty.

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 our Pastoral Leader who works very closely with our Attendance Officer, to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- We have our own school Attendance Officer who will be involved fully in planning and delivering strategies to improve attendance working in partnership with the Pastoral Leader and the designated teacher for LAC.

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 a member of the Inclusion Team as soon as any concerns regarding behaviour are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.

- Our Pastoral Leader and/or Learning Mentor are highly experienced and can potentially begin a one to one programme of support using very specific strategies as a result of carrying out an assessment on the child.

- If there are continuing high level concerns the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service may be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to address the behaviour. The designated LAC teacher, who is also the SENDCo, will have responsibility for organising this, if required.

- 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 always provide a package of support from our Inclusion Team which could include a range of strategies - one to one support, bespoke personalised timetables, Well-being intervention, specific rewards etc Strategies will always be considered, ideas shared with all key stakeholders and then agreements made and out into practice with a review and evaluation opportunity built in to assess progress.

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:

- Time to complete home learning activities during one to one time with family worker or learning mentor
- Allocated time during the school day as agreed with the class teacher and TA support provided
- Agreed home learning activities that are essential and those which are optional

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 designated LAC teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities

- The designated LAC teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities and this will be discussed at the PEP and LAC Meetings.

- The designated LAC teacher will liaise with LA support services and the Virtual School to consider 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

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 designated LAC teacher 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 designated LAC teacher is Miss Azra Foric

The role of the designated LAC teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. For this reason the person appointed will have non-teaching time available to ensure that they can fulfill the requirements of the role:

- Liaise and meet with colleagues in the Inclusion Team to coordinate the support and provision for Looked After Children
- Liaise and meet with the class teacher to gather information and consider provision and intervention strategies required
- Gather appropriate information and ensure this is all accurately inputted onto the EPEP system prior to the termly meetings
- Analyse the data and information gathered and to consider future provision required
- Monitor the impact of the provision
- Lead PEP meetings and successfully communicate the dates/times to all key stakeholders with the support of the family worker

The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the designated LAC teacher 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 (Headteacher and Deputy DSLs)
- Work closely with Social Workers, the learning mentor and the family worker to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans
- Ensure there is school representation at the LAC Meetings (Pastoral Leader)
- Work with the children effectively and ensure that they have their views and ideas heard

6.2 The Head Teacher and Senior Leaders

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 designated LAC teacher, are enabled to carry them out.

6.3 The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Bernadette Pettman (Chair of Governors)

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 Local Governing Body

The next review will be October 2027.