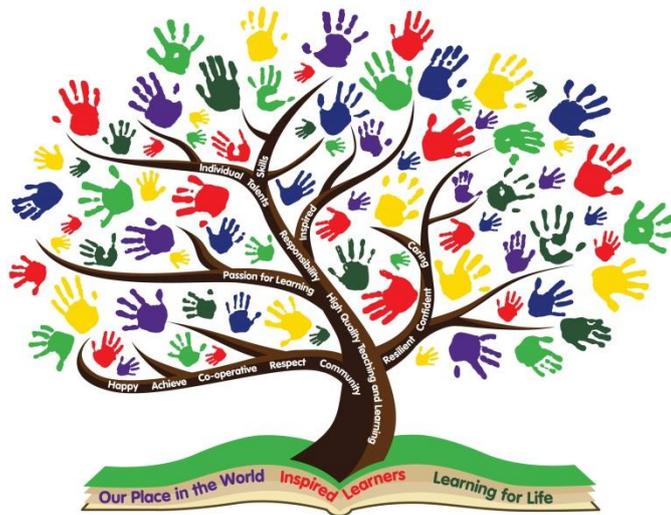


THAKEHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Small School, Big Opportunities, Great Achievements'



Children Looked After Policy

Thakeham Primary School

Date approved by The Standards, Teaching & Learning Committee:
01.09.17

Review Date: November 2020

Signed

Headteacher: *S. Norton*

Chair of Standards, Teaching & Learning Committee:

ACR

Rationale

Nationally, Children Looked After significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Children Looked After are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being, in line with Every Child Matters. 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, helping Children Looked After succeed, and providing a better future for them is a key priority for us at Thakeham Primary School.

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.

Legal Framework

This policy takes account of:

- the Council’s duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Children looked after
- the Education (Admission of Children looked after) (England) Regulations 2006
- relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all Children Looked After
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all Children Looked After
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and trancies for all Children Looked After
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of Children Looked After
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of Children Looked After

Objectives

We will:

- Endeavour to support all Children Looked After educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.

- Ensure all Children Looked After have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each Child Looked After has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
- Seek to review all school policies in light of relevant legislation.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Designated Teacher

At Thakeham Primary School our Designated Teacher for CLA is Sam Norton, Headteacher.

The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every Child Looked After 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 Child Looked After matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how Children Looked After learn and achieve.

This work will ensure that everyone involved in helping Children Looked After understand that in order to do this they need to:

- have high expectations of looked after children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- undertake relevant training;
- 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 Child Looked After'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, the Virtual School Headteacher and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.

In promoting the educational achievement of Children Looked After 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 are 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 use of a wide range of approaches to assessment 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 benefit from the use of the allotted pupil premium funding and are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and 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
- 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 Personal Education Plan (PEP) within school in partnership with others as necessary.
- Prepare and write an annual report to the Governing Body using the agreed template

Most importantly, the designated teacher is the child's champion in school and the first point of contact for school colleagues, carers and social workers regarding anything to do with the child's education.

The Role of the Governing Body

Our named Children Looked After Governor is Natalie Wills who will work in co-operation with the Designated Teacher for ensuring that all Children Looked After have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers.

The named Governor/Governing Body should be satisfied that:

- the school has a coherent policy for Children Looked After
- the school's other policies and procedures support these children's needs and the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of any new legislation
- there is a Designated Teacher in place who has received appropriate training
- Children Looked After have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- resources are allocated to meet the needs of children looked after
- the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children Looked After
- all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children Looked After

- the academic progress of Children Looked After is monitored through an annual report
- work is undertaken to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Children Looked After achieve and enjoy their time at the school.

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 crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate. These are now completed electronically (ePEP).

The PEP will consider:

- the child's strength's and weaknesses
- interests, both in and out of school
- developmental and 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

Children Looked After are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the WSCC 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 Visits and Special Activities

Given the delays that children looked after experience in getting parental consent for school visits and activities, we will aim to ensure that children looked after enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on visits 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. The School Complaints Policy should be followed.