

Hawridge and Cholesbury CE School



Looked After Children Policy

Date: January 2016

Review Date: January 2019

Rationale

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of Looked After children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion, providing a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption.

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.

Furthermore, the term “Looked After”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, which has been adopted by the DfE in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”.

Legal Framework

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of Looked After children.

Schools must:

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

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

Teachers and other staff in this school will:

- work alongside social workers to ensure that each Looked After child has a current Individual Education Plan in place.
- seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the LA's Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.

Looked After Children in this school will:

- have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extracurricular activities, work experience and enjoy the school experience fully.
- be addressed and managed discreetly and sensitively, especially surrounding work on family.
- be supported to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

1. Induction

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

- Children and their carers and professionals involved with the child will be invited into school to meet with the Headteacher and discuss suitable induction and the child's needs in the first instance.
- A second visit will be arranged. During this second visit the child and carers will be shown around school, introduced to staff and introduced to their prospective class teacher and peers.
- At least one more visit into school to spend time with their class teacher and peers will be encouraged before they are admitted full time.
- If the child has already been in an educational establishment then the Headteacher will liaise with the Headteacher of this establishment. An individual plan for transition into the school will be developed by the Headteacher, Designated Teacher, professionals and carers to ensure a smooth transition.
- All teachers will be made aware of the child's needs and key adults in their life such as carers, support workers and other professionals.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Headteacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all Looked After children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Headteacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with Looked After children.

Named Governor: Mrs Samantha Purvis

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- the school has a coherent policy for Looked After children.
- the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfE guidelines.
- the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training.
- Looked After children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum.
- the Governor produces an annual report.

Headteacher: Mrs Rosie Phillips

The Headteacher will:

- monitor attendance, exclusions and academic achievements
- appoint the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training.
- oversee the development of the policy on Looked After children.
- be responsible for all systems to support Looked After children.
- report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of Looked After pupils in the school
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints

Designated Teacher: Mrs Rosie Phillips

The Designated Teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support Looked After children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all Looked After children in the school.

The Designated Teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all Looked After children and will:

- have an overview holding and maintaining records regarding all Looked After children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child.
- establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer.
- monitor the educational progress of all Looked After children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern.

The Designated Teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue.
- being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's IEP and helping to coordinate meetings.
- playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of Looked After children
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties including liaising with social worker regarding the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP).

The Designated Teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues (this maybe the class teacher or LSA).
- by ensuring each child has an Individual Education Plan.
- by requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a Looked After child requires additional academic or behavioural support.
- by having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions/ induction.

Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:

- Pupil Progress Meetings.
- Tracking of progress and inclusion of interventions if necessary.
- Completion of other appropriate assessment.
- Consultation Evenings will the class teacher will be held in the Autumn and Spring Term to discuss progress.
- A written report will be completed in the Summer Term by the class teacher.
- Their progress will also be collated and closely monitored with children who are identified as 'pupil premium' or 'pupil premium plus'.
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors termly.

This information will be analysed by the Senior Leadership Team to measure the

- Attainment and Progress of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.
- Progress is tracked and interventions are arranged if required.
- All children including Looked After Children have 'challenging' progress targets set at the beginning of the year.

Attendance Monitoring:

- Attendance data is collated on a regular basis for all children in school including Looked After Children.
- This information is analysed and kept in a secure cupboard in the school bursar's office
- Any absence is followed up and if absence falls below 90% carers and professionals will be invited into school to meet with the Headteacher.

- This information will be analysed by the Headteacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.
- If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality, the Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Headteacher to gain their support and collect any relevant information.
- Attendance is celebrated termly by '100% Attendance Awards'.
- Attendance and lateness is tracked on a weekly basis and acted upon if required.

3. Behaviour:

There are factors in the lives of Looked After Children which 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 Headteacher as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.
- The staff will follow the school Behaviour Policy. The strategies included within these documents take into account all children's needs.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff inform support services such as the Educational Psychology Service and PRU will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the challenging behaviour. The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with the Headteacher

Monitoring Behaviour

- Behaviour logs will be kept by the class teacher – including positive and challenging behaviours.
- Incident books will be completed if required.
- This information will be analysed by The Designated Teacher 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

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.

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.

4. 2 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.

- Refer to homework policy

4. 3 Extra-Curricular Activities

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 Teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities *through Individual Education Plan meetings*

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 Individual 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 Teacher will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for:

- accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives, including PPIs.
- liaising with Social Workers to ensure all Looked After Children have a Individual 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. 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.

The next review will be January 2019

Appendix 1 – Individual Education Plans for Hawridge and Cholesbury CE School Looked After Children

Individual Education Plans for Hawridge and Cholesbury Looked After Children

The statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked After children under S52 of the Children Act 2004 makes it clear that the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is not only an integral part of The Care Plan but also provides the means by which a Looked After child's educational progress and achievement can be monitored. The IEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which secures good basic skills, stretches aspirations and builds life chances.

The IEP should involve all those with an interest in the child's education including

- The child/young person
- The social worker
- The Designated Teacher
- The carer
- The parent (where appropriate)

Effective and high quality IEPs should:

- be a comprehensive and enduring record of the child's experience, progress and achievement (academic and otherwise);
- be linked to information in other education plans, including a statement of special educational needs
- identify developmental and educational needs (short and long term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
- set short term targets, including progress monitoring against each of the areas identified against development and educational needs;
- set long term plans and educational targets and aspirations (e. g. in relation to public examinations, further and higher education, work experience and career plans and aspirations);
- document identified actions for specific individuals intended to support the achievement of agreed targets;
- identify whether the child is eligible for the Pupil Premium and if so how the allowance will be used to support the targets set in the IEP;

The initial IEP

The statutory guidance states that it is the social worker's responsibility to initiate the IEP and that every child and young person Looked After should have a IEP in place for the first statutory review of the Care Plan (within 20 days). It is expected that a IEP will be completed for all compulsory school age children, those in Early Years provision and those over compulsory school age who are in education.

With effect from 1 September 2015, the Education Support Team for Looked After Children will co-ordinate and facilitate the initial IEP.

(See below for guidance on IEP reviews)

On receiving information that a child or young person has become LAC, a member of the team will

- Liaise with the social worker, the Designated Teacher/early years provider and the carer(s) to arrange an initial IEP meeting as soon as possible
- Identify any additional professionals involved and invite them to the meeting if appropriate
- Request that the social worker complete Part A of the IEP
- Request that the Designated Teacher complete Part B of the IEP
- Request that the Designated Teacher supports the child/young person to complete their section of the IEP
- Attend and chair the initial IEP meeting
- Complete Part C of the IEP
- Collate all parts of the IEP, ensuring all the necessary information is included
- Ensure the completed document is uploaded to CareStore and copies are distributed to all relevant parties.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the progress the child/young person is making, identify any barriers to progress, agree appropriate targets and develop an action plan that will support the child/young person in achieving their objectives. It is important therefore that as much information as possible is gathered in advance and made available to the meeting.

The child/young person and parent(s) should be involved as far as is appropriate and possible. If a child/young person is without education provision, the Education Manager for Looked After Children will be consulted.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Arranging for the child or young person to complete their section of the IEP, which gives an opportunity for the child to have their views taken into account and valued.
- Completing the sections of the form which require information relating to attainment, progress, target setting, attendance, support needs and school interventions
- Identifying those education colleagues who will have a contribution to make to the Meeting

The Social Worker is responsible for:

- Consulting with carers and parents who should be encouraged to attend the meeting as they have a key role to play as the first line of support for the child or young person's education
- Completing the sections of the form which require information relating to personal details, care details, responsibilities

Reviewing the IEP

The IEP will need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it takes account of progress, changes and transitions. The review should always involve a meeting so that the views of all those involved can be taken account of in developing the action plan – if holding a meeting to review the IEP is not possible the Education Manager for Looked After Children must be consulted.

The IEP must be reviewed every 6 months but may be reviewed earlier if there is a significant change that impacts on education – particularly a change of school.

The child's social worker is responsible for arranging the IEP review.

This will involve

- Arranging a date for the review meeting
- Inviting relevant professionals, carer, parent and child/young person to the meeting
- Ensuring the paperwork is updated
 - Part A by the social worker
 - Part B by the Designated Teacher
 - The child/young person's views
- Ensuring that Part C is completed at the meeting
- Ensuring that the completed paperwork is collated, uploaded to CareStore and distributed to those who attended the meeting
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The Education Support Team for Looked After Children will continue to provide support and guidance in respect of the IEP process but will only attend review meetings if there is an identified need to do so.

The Education Manager for Looked After Children will monitor the IEP process, working with those directly involved to ensure IEPs are making a positive contribution to improving educational outcomes.

The IEP process

When a child/young person becomes Looked After:

The Education Support Team will:

- i. Contact the Designated Teacher, social worker and carer(s) to arrange a meeting
- ii. Request that the social worker
 - a. Completes IEP Part A – Core Information
- iii. Request that the Designated Teacher
 - b. Completes IEP Part B – Core Information
 - c. Ensures the child/young person has opportunity to complete their section of the IEP
- iv. Identify, consult with additional educational professionals and invite them to the IEP meeting if appropriate
- v. Ensure that carers, and if appropriate parents, are invited to the IEP meeting

The initial IEP meeting:

The meeting should focus on:

- Sharing relevant information.
- Acknowledging strengths and achievements.
- Agreeing SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) – these may be targets already identified in existing plans eg IEPs, PSPs.
- Considering longer term goals and identifying any actions necessary to support progress towards those goals.
- Identifying any barriers to progress and agreeing appropriate action to reduce the impact on learning.
- Considering how the Pupil Premium could support the action plan
- Agreeing a date to review the IEP.

The discussion and decisions made at the meeting should be recorded using the section of the IEP form headed Part C – Review and Plan.

The Education Support Team will ensure the IEP proforma is completed, circulated to everyone invited to the meeting and a copy saved in CareStore.

Implementing the plan

The Designated Teacher should ensure the IEP is implemented. This will involve liaising with colleagues and monitoring the impact of the agreed actions, strategies and interventions.

Reviewing the plan

The plan should be reviewed as agreed, within 6 months or earlier if circumstances change significantly. **The child's social worker is responsible for ensuring the IEP is reviewed within the agreed timescales – see additional guidance above.**