



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Our Vision:

We are committed to quality learning in a positive, happy and Christian atmosphere where everyone within the school community is valued as an individual. We expect everyone to, 'Treat others as you want them to treat you.' (Matthew 7:12-14). We have high expectations of all and strive to provide a safe, challenging, exciting and stimulating environment.

Our Values:

To ensure the safety of our pupils, staff and visitors are met through our school values of:

Respect – by recognising that Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups within society and understanding the additional challenges these children face.

Compassion – by considering the needs of the individual when putting procedures in place to provide an inclusive and safe environment for the child.

Creation – creating a safe and secure environment which allows Looked After Children to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to thrive.

Perseverance – To persevere in providing an inclusive, welcoming and friendly environment in which Christian and caring values are central to the ethos of the school, ensuring all children feel valued and secure.

Service – by building strong partnerships with carers and care workers/agencies, as we serve to help keep Looked after Children safe and for children to reach their full potential.

Willaston Church of England Primary School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

The designated teacher for Looked After Children is **Miss Chapman**.

The Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children is **Mr J Hilditch**.

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and 2008 associated guidance on the education of LAC.

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for Looked After Children as for all children
- ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
- ensure that Looked After Children take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After Children are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
- ensure that Looked After Children are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Who are Looked After Children?

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 by the authority. 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**’. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Admissions

The Governing Body endorses Cheshire West and Chester Admission Policy for Looked After Children. The Local Authority, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against Looked After Children.

Due to care placement changes, Looked After Children may enter school mid-term. Children will be positively welcomed into our school. If necessary we will offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle in.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad based curriculum. Our Looked After Child policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will try to ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Looked After Children.

Allocation of resources

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

Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

The social worker for the Looked After Child should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the child and carer is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each Looked After Child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. Looked After Children will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who all the Looked After Children are in school and will have access to their relevant contact details, including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any Looked After Child from other authorities. It is important that the school flags Looked After Child status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support Looked After Children. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with Looked After Children.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their full potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual Looked After Children:

- Looked After Children teams
- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical Officers
- School Nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service
- School Age Parents' Officer.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- under achievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people. The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect.

The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by Looked After Children have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education

- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for Looked After Child within school
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Looked After Children on both the child and the rest of the school community
- know who all the Looked After Children are in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- attend relevant training about Looked After Children
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate
- ensure that Looked After Children receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid- year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- ensure that all Looked After Children have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- act as the key adviser for staff and Governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children
- ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra- curricular activities for Looked After Children
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement
- contribute information to Looked After Children reviews when required
- report to the Governing Body on Looked After Children in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc.
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:

- the number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
 - their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - their attainment compared to other pupils.
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend Governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children
 - arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk,
 - possibly through the learning mentor or Peer Pals when the pupil is new to school
 - ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. Looked After Children are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- follow school procedures regarding Looked After Children
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress.
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children
- positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self- esteem.
- ensure any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties
- only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- contribute to regular liaison with social care, colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- try to ensure that the admission practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice
- try to ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- try to ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and ensure that appropriate training is given.

- liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met
- nominate a Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher regarding Looked After Children
- try to ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of Looked After Children
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of Looked After Children

Approved by Governors 11th December 2023



Signed Chair of Governors