



St. Mary's CE (VC) Primary School

LAC Policy

2016-2017

Overall aims

We at St. Mary's CE (VC) Primary School will do for Looked After Children what we do for all children only more so. We aim to ensure that Looked After Children in care excel, as we aim for all children to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that education does matter. We will listen to what Looked After Children tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised through Dudley Virtual School for Looked After Children.

St. Mary's CE (VC) Primary School strives to ensure that the culture and Christian ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school, pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Objectives

St. Mary's CE (VC) Primary School will support children in care by:

Ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll;

Balancing high levels of support with real challenge;

Ensuring that each child has a high quality Personal Education Plan;

Linking each child to a key person they relate well to;

Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;

Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies;

Encouraging and supporting Looked After Children to take responsibility for their learning;

Engaging Looked After Children in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities;

Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance;

Giving integrated but low profile support in school for each child in care so that they are not made to feel different from other children;

Planning for future transitions e.g. to secondary school.

The Governor with special responsibility for children in care in this school is Mrs.E.A.Green.

The designated teacher in this school is Mrs.L.M.Perkins.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All Looked After Children must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping children in care to achieve and enjoy. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the young person, carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from the Virtual School for Looked After Children. If the young person has an Educational Health and Care Plan this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

One to one tuition

All Looked After Children are entitled to one to one tuition in English and/or Mathematics even if they appear to be reaching expected levels. This school is committed to prioritising all Looked After Children for this tuition.

Additional funding

Looked After Children are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of dedicated funding where available for all eligible Looked After Children on roll to provide additional, Personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

Admissions/Induction Arrangements

Looked After Children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the school or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the school's expectations and processes and the child will meet with the designated teacher for Looked After Children. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. Consideration will be given to giving the child a peer mentor. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When children already on school roll enter care the school will ensure that the student meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the school procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and a PEP prepared as soon as possible in the same way as for those children already in care admitted to school.

At 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 visits or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school record to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

Many Looked After Children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However we recognise that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

School Visits and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that Looked After Children enjoy as many extra curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on visits or enrichment activities for which they are eligible and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school visits and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Leaving Arrangements

When a Looked After Child leaves the school we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school.

This policy is dated: December 2015

To be reviewed: December 2016

Annex 1 – Definitions and complaints procedure

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 is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- Children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- Children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- Children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with the parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

Legal Framework

From 1 September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools are required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) to appoint a designated teacher (DT) to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children who are on the school roll.

Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer 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 alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Headteacher, in which case the complaint will go straight to the Chair of Governors.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Headteacher's response.

Annex 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Governing Body:

- The governing body will ensure that the designated teacher and the named governor undertake appropriate training and are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that the designated teacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Governors will consider an annual report from the designated teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, Looked After Children with Special Educational Needs or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of Dudley Virtual School for Looked After Children.

- The governing body, Headteacher and school leadership team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:

The school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of Looked After Children on roll;

The school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of Looked After Children and ensuring those needs are met.

- Resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of Looked After Children.

The role of the Senior Leadership Team

- To ensure that resources for Looked After Children (Pupil Premium, SEN etc) are used to directly benefit the child.
- To ensure that, in partnership with the governing body, the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of Looked After Children.
- To make sure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting Looked After Children to achieve.
- In partnership with the governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher.
- To ensure Looked After Children have access to all opportunities/activities and the best possible educational provision.
- Oversee the development of the policy on Looked After Children.
- Evaluate the standards and achievements of Looked After Children and report these termly to the governing body.
- Ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support Looked After children and eradicate barriers to learning.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children and take action where progress, behaviour or attendance is a cause for concern.

The role of the designated teacher within the school:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how Looked After Children learn.
- Promote the educational achievement of every Looked After Children on the school's roll.
- 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 in place to support Looked After Children's learning.
- Make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets.
- Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning.
- Make sure that Looked After Children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school.

- Set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all Looked After Children and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer.
- Act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties.
- Ensure a warm welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer/parent, using the PEP to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for Looked After Children that is necessary within the school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage Looked After Children to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Prepare an annual report to the Governing Body on the achievements and current status of the school's Looked After Children.
- Inform and/or set up timely meetings with relevant parties, including the LACES, where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is 'at risk' of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and, if the pupil changes school, to a new school.
- Be proactive in supporting transition and planning when the child is moving to a new phase of education.
- Be aware that a disproportionate number of Looked After Children say they are bullied and actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that the voice of the child is heard and acted upon appropriately.
- Oversee the recording of data on baseline attainment, current attainment and targets in the PEP.
- Ensure that PEPs have targets for progress.
- Support Carers/parents to promote education at home e.g. home learning.
- Have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how Looked After Children learn and achieve.
- Arrange for a mentor or peer mentor for each Looked After Child on the role of the school.

The role of all those involved in supporting Looked After Children:

- Ensure that all Looked After Children are made to feel welcome and included in line with the school's distinctive Christian ethos;
- Have high expectations of Looked After Children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families.
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a Looked After Child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children.
- Understand how important it is to see Looked After Children as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers.
- Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a Looked After Children's status.

- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential.
- Have high aspirations for the education and personal achievement of Looked After Children.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's request for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to feel safe and successful within the school.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.

This policy links with –

The School's Positive Behaviour Policy.

The School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

The School's Child Protection Policy.

The School's SEND Policy.

The School's Home/School Agreement.

The School's Attendance Policy.

The School's Admissions Policy.

The School's PSHE Policy.

The School's Equal Opportunities Policy.