



No. 8b
Policy for Looked After Children



In pursuit of this policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure the needs of Looked After Children in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend regular and relevant training on Looked After Children.

Our Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is *Mrs Debbie Anderson*

Our nominated Governor for Looked After Children is *Mrs Jenny Litton*

Rationale

College Park Infant School is committed to ensuring all children have equitable access to a high quality education delivered within a safe and positive learning environment, which enables them to fulfil their potential.

The school recognises that nationally and locally there is considerable underachievement of Looked After Children in comparison to their peers, largely as a result of the impact of life experiences, rather than differences in overall ability.

Under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004, the school understands and supports its role in working with children, parents and carers and the local authority to ensure underachievement is challenged and high aspirations are encouraged amongst Looked After Children attending our school.

We therefore set out the following aims:

Aims

- Looked After Children will have priority for all educational opportunities including one to one tuition where appropriate.
- We will aim to ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all Looked After Children.
- We will have high expectations for all Looked After Children.
- We will aim to provide continuity and stability for our Looked After Children.
- Looked After Children will be provided with early intervention wherever possible.

Objectives

We will ensure that –

- We participate in discussion, decision making and the planning of the PEP (Personal Education Plan).
- We work in partnership with the social worker to ensure the progress of the Looked After Child is monitored and the PEP is reviewed regularly.
- Our designated teacher works to promote and sustain the educational achievement and welfare of the Looked After Children in our school.
- All staff are aware of the impact on the emotional and social development of a Looked After Child.

- The progress and attainment of all Looked After Children will be carefully monitored by the Designated Teacher.
- We provide opportunities for Looked After Children to take part in extra curricular activities.
- We give all Looked After Children the chance to develop emotional literacy and access to additional support in these areas if necessary.
- We work jointly with other Local Authority agencies to ensure consistency and work closely with parents, foster carers and social workers in order to secure a successful school experience.
- We share and transfer information and data speedily to relevant agencies and individuals.
- We continue to develop our knowledge and attend relevant training related to the needs of the Looked After Children in our care.

Admissions to Our School

- The Governing Board supports Portsmouth LA's approach to admissions giving Looked After Children the highest priority for admission to the identified school.
- Our school will ensure Looked After Children are named as first priority within our school written admissions criteria.
- Sometimes care placement changes lead to Looked After Children entering school mid-term or mid-year. As necessary, we will give a positive welcome, plan entry, offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help pupils settle in school.

Inclusion and Allocation of Resources

- Our policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based, and stimulating curriculum & learning programme.
- For Looked After Children there can often be a need to develop learning opportunities emphasising personalised planning & planned inclusive approaches.
- The Governing Board will ensure our school makes all appropriate learning provision for Looked After Children. Resources are allocated to support Looked After Children in line with this policy and with our wider school teaching & learning policies and good practice.

Monitoring the Progress of Looked After Children

- Progress for Looked After Children in school is monitored and supported via best practice, guided by school policies for teaching and learning.
- We will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of LAC pupils at regular intervals.
- We will ensure that the school makes an assessment of the pupil's needs and attainment on entry, to ensure continuity of learning.
- We will ensure that the statutory Personal Education Plan (PEP) processes are supported systematically delivered within appropriate timescales.
- The Social Worker for each Looked After Child in school will initiate a Personal Education Plan in partnership with our Designated Teacher. This takes place within 20 days of the pupil joining the school or entering care.
- Each PEP will be reviewed according to the needs of the pupil, but at least every 6 months (initiated by the Social Worker or Reviewing Officer).
- The pupil's views are actively and sensitively sought by the appropriate key partner (Designated Teacher, Social Worker, Carer, Education Caseworker).
- The views of the pupil and Carers are noted within the PEP Form and shared sensitively at the meeting. The pupil is as actively involved as possible in selecting appropriate targets and with decisions relating to school and learning.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- Our Designated Teacher will co-ordinate record keeping for of all Looked After Children in school.
- Records will include individual learning plans, up to date progress & attainment records, PEP planning records and personalised information relating to care context as appropriate.
- Looked After Children status is appropriately 'flagged' in school information management systems, ensuring information & planning records are readily available as required.
- We will ensure there is ready access to information and up to date contact details for Carers, Parents (where appropriate), & Social Worker.
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving school promptly if there is a transfer to another school.
- Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of school staff team. We are guided by best practice and on the 'need to know'. Wherever possible pupils' wishes are taken into account in sharing information within the staff team.

Staff and Governors' Development and Training

- All staff and governors are encouraged to develop via reflective processes. We encourage on-going engagement with relevant CPD to maintain and extend individual and team expertise in supporting Looked After Children to progress.
- Our Designated Teacher makes particular efforts to develop good awareness and understanding of issues, guidance and developments associated with the Looked After Children context. The DT disseminates knowledge and skills to colleagues in school as appropriate and necessary. Partnership working and collaboration with the LA & Virtual School for LAC is essential here.
- Our nominated Governor will attend appropriate briefings and relevant development opportunities provided by the LA & Virtual School for Looked After Children.

Partnership Working

- Our school values the views of Carers & Parents. We firmly believe in developing strong partnerships with Carers/Parents & Residential Care Workers to enable pupils achieve to their potential.
- We will develop close relationships and collaborative work to promote the learning and well-being of individual children, both in and out of school.
- PEP meetings, other school liaison & consultation processes and informal day to day dialogue are all seen as good opportunities to enhance our partnerships.
- We recognise the essential contributions that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. We commit to developing positive partnerships with all involved. Our partnerships with community partners are extensive; some of our key partners for Looked After Children include :-

LAC Team (Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Education Caseworkers); Educational Psychologists; SEN Team; Behaviour Support; Learning Support; Other Local Authority Services; Medical Officers; School Nurses; CAMHS; Attendance Monitoring Officers; Social Care Sessional Staff/Community Care Worker/ Residential Care Staff; Youth Offending Service; Locality Team Workers; Independent Review Officers; Advocacy Services.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- Our policy for Looked After Children is of the highest importance.
- We will undertake a review of both policy and relevant best practices each year.
- The outcomes of this review are linked directly to school development processes and the School Improvement Plan.
- The day to day monitoring of the implementation of the Policy will be undertaken by the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

- The Governing Board will receive a report on the educational performance of Looked After Children and the effectiveness of the role of the Designated Teacher on an annual basis.

This policy document should be used alongside:

Section 52 Statutory Guidance on the Children Act 2004

DCSF Statutory Guidance for Designated Teachers of Looked After Children

DCSF Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children' 2009

Care Matters 2007

2008 Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children.

Date Agreed : September 2016

Review: (Annually) Autumn 2017

Agreed by : Staff, Nominated Governor for Looked After Children, Welfare Committee

APPENDIX 1 - 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. Looked After Children may fall into one of following 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' (LAC). They may be Looked After by our Local Authority (LA), or may be in the care of another LA, but living in or attending a school in our LA.

APPENDIX 2 – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

HEADTEACHER & SLT

- To provide an annual report on the provision for, and progress of Looked After Children to the Governing Board.
- To make it clear to staff and other school stakeholders that many Looked After Children require sensitivity and positive personalised planning above and beyond most peers, and that school policy clearly supports this approach.
- To give the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children the time and facilities to carry out his/her job description fully and effectively, and to support them at all times in their work.
- To show a personal commitment and involvement with Looked After Children in the school.
- To challenge negative stereotypes of Looked After Children, and to insist on the highest of expectations in terms of Looked After Children achieving their potential.
- To give Looked After Children the highest priority, in terms of admissions to the school even when there is over subscription.
- To provide CPD for staff on issues pertaining to Looked After Children and to ensure that the DT attends regular network meetings and training.

DESIGNATED TEACHER

- To be an advocate for Looked After Children within school.
- To be aware and build relationships with all Looked After Children in school and ensure the availability of all relevant details/records from school record-keeping systems as required.
- To attend relevant CPD and Networks about Looked After Children.
- To act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice from the Looked After Children Team & other professionals as appropriate.
- To 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 visits to help the new pupil settle.
- To 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.
- To keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals.
- To convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- To 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.
- To act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children.
- To ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings, parents evenings and other school events.
- To actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for Looked After Children.
- To ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Children transfers to another educational placement.
- To contribute information to Looked After Children reviews when required.
- To report to the Governing Board on LAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development.

- To agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc.
- To attend governor meetings as appropriate e.g. admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children.
- To arrange a mentor or 'befriender' (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, especially when the pupil is new to school.
- To ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. (LAC are 6-8 times more likely to have an SEN Statement than other pupils in school.

SCHOOL STAFF

- To follow school procedures, policies and best practice in line with the school's vision and aims.
- To keep the Designated Teacher informed about Looked After Children's progress
- To have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.
- To positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self-esteem.
- To ensure any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- To 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.
- To liaise closely with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties.
- To contribute to regular liaison with Social Care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times.
- To keep appropriate records and maintain appropriate confidentiality; to make these available to the DT, other professionals, parents/carers & Looked After Child as appropriate.

SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

- To use official exclusions only as the very last resort and in line with the Local Authority's procedures, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement. Looked After Children should have 'first day' provision following any exclusion.
- To ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the latest Admissions Code of Practice.
- To ensure all governors are fully aware of the statutory duties and requirements to promote learning and achievement for Looked After Children.
- To ensure that an appropriately qualified and experienced Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is appointed.
- To liaise with the Head teacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met.
- To nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked After Children who liaises regularly with the Designated Teacher.
- To read and respond appropriately to regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- 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 (academic and vocational), out of school learning and extra-curricular activities, work experience and careers guidance.
- To review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children annually.
- To ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to any exclusion meetings of Looked After Children.