



Policy for
Looked After Children (LAC) and
Previously Looked After Children
(PLA)

December 2019



POLICY OBJECTIVE

TO promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLA) on the role of this school.

Name of the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLA

Mrs Robyn Morrey

Name of the Designated School Governor for LAC and PLA

Mrs Antoinette Fisher

INTRODUCTION

The governing body of Dorridge Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. We will create an environment where looked after children (LAC) and previously looked after children (PLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the *'DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local – authority maintained schools carrying out duties for looked after and previously looked after children.'* 28th February 2018

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for LAC and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that LAC experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidently, as needs arise.

For the purposes of this guidance:

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person³, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Taken from: The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities. February 2018

Our Aims for LAC

- To provide a safe and secure environment where practice supports those who may have suffered with trauma and loss or may have attachment needs. Education would always be central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of LAC and PLA;
- To narrow any gap between the attainment of LAC and PLA and their peers through accelerated and rapid progress;
- That they benefit from school-based interventions and use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact;
- For all LAC to have a minimum of three Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress;
- For all adults to provide discreet sensitive, child-led support, with one key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take special interest in daily life at school;
- LAC and their foster families will feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed in to the community.

LAC (Looked After Child) Review Process

- The process begins when a child becomes a LAC
- The first LAC review should take place within 28 days, then 3 months and after this, every 6 months.
- LAC reviews are chaired by Independent Review Officers (IROs), who are independent of Education or Social Care.
- All LAC have a Care Plan. Any Child Protection Plans previously in place turn into a Care Plan once the child has been taken into care. Care Plans are overseen by the child's social worker.
- The IRO reviews the Care Plan and sets recommendations for all involved and timescales to which these should be actioned.

PEP (Personal Education Plan) Review Process for LAC

- A PEP needs to be written and in place within 20 school days of admission.
- It is the Designated Teacher's responsibility to ensure that PEPs exist for all children in school and to co-ordinate with all relevant partners.
- The PEP assists stability and continuity for the child by showing a history and story which informs the present.
- The PEP sets short term targets and long term plans.
- It reflects and records the child's aspirations and views.
- It plans for and monitors the use of the Pupil Premium Plus money.
- PEP meetings are held every term and are chaired by the Designated Teacher.
- Previous targets are reviewed and new ones are set.
- Decisions are made in these meetings on how to spend the Pupil Premium Plus money that term.
- Paperwork is provided by the Local Authority and it is the Designated Teacher's responsibility to complete the paperwork during the meeting and send it back to the authority within the given timescale (5 days in Solihull).

Virtual School for Looked After Children

- All local authorities must have a virtual school head (VSH) who is in charge of promoting the educational achievement of the LAC.
- The VSH's role is to know how the LAC are doing and to help school staff and social workers to find out about the extra needs of these children and any additional support available to them.
- The Virtual School for Looked After Children ensures that schools, social workers, carers and other professionals understand the statutory responsibilities they all have and are aware of best practice.

Important Considerations

- Children in care can sometimes live at home with their parents
- Most LAC live with foster parents
- Many LAC experience several or multiple placement moves.
- The majority of under 5s will be adopted.
- Many are in care because they have suffered neglect, abuse and have unmet social and emotional needs.
- Sensitivity and confidentiality are important at all times.
- Early childhood experiences impact upon the child's ability to learn and form relationships.
- Securely attached children respond positively to others, have good social skills, high levels of self esteem and cope with setbacks. The opposite is true for a child whose early childhood has not allowed secure attachments to be made.
- There are particular challenges for LAC when their early experiences have been traumatic.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Head Teacher is committed to promoting improved educational life chances for LAC and PLA. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for LAC has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role. They will monitor the role of the

Designated Teacher to ensure that LAC and PLA make progress and that the whole school staff receives appropriate training.

The Designated Teacher for LAC and PLA Children is Robyn Morrey. She is a qualified teacher and will promote improved educational life chances for LAC and PLA by:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children; when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed and relevant targets are set and worked on.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings.
- Attend all LAC Meetings and PEP Meetings.
- Ensuring LAC or PLA has access to quality first teaching;
- Tracking the progress of LAC and PLA across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and books;
- Ensuring that PP+ is used effectively and efficiently;
- Performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies;
- Developing expertise in the field of LAC;
- Providing and attending training and offering advice to the whole school staff;
- Reporting to the Head Teacher and Governing Body on the attainment of LAC and PLA and school resources and staff training needs for this group of children;
- Prioritising LAC for school based additional support unless this is of detrimental effect or impact on the child (i.e. causes them to miss out on aspects of the curriculum);
- Ensuring that LAC and PLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within school because of their care status;
- Encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible.
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

- Ensure that any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Respond positively to a Looked After Child's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- As with all children, ensure that no Looked After Child is stigmatised in any way.
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a Looked After Child to achieve stability within the school setting.
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children.
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children.
- Read the school's policy for LAC and PLA and associated guidance
- Play their part in creating an attachment and trauma-informed culture and securing rapid progress for LAC by ensuring they benefit from appropriate school-based support available.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children.

- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names).
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children.
- Support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met.
- Nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher and receives termly progress reports and feedback (without any names).
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information on Looked After Children will be shared with school staff on a “need to know” basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

ATTENDANCE

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of LAC and PLA to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including Virtual School, as an early intervention.

ADMISSIONS/TRANSITIONS:

- Prioritising LAC and PLA at the point of admission
- Record the date of application and date of admission
- The swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- Early identification of a staff mentor and peer buddy
- Additional support and planning for LAC and PLA at times of transition
- Record the reason for exit and include in the report to Governing Body

Additional Educational Needs:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for LAC and PLA with additional educational needs by:

- Having high expectations
- Ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria (*in line with the DfE Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After children. 28th February 2018*)
- Ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress each academic year, as agreed in the PEP.

Special Educational Needs:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for LAC and PLA with special educational needs by:

- Having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year (in line with the expectation set out in the PEP)
- Ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is ‘additional to and different from’ the universal and additional needs provision (in line with the SEN Code of Practice)
- Ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed (in line with the SEN Code of Practice)
- Ensuring that any work carried out by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight.

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on LAC by: familiarising themselves with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with by staff by following the school's policy.

Exclusion:

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a LAC, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachment and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned coordinator from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion.

LAC and PLA with special educational needs should have exclusion as a behaviour management action as a last possible resort .

Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will make every effort to engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work this will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of LAC and PLA.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The Local Authority where the child is living when taken in to care pays their Pupil Premium every term. They also organise LAC Meetings and attend PEP meetings. The paperwork for PEP meetings is different for each local authority.
- Pupil Premium Plus money is 'ring-fenced' for LAC children.
- Pupil Premium money for Previously Looked After Children is different and comes to the school budget as part of the larger 'pot' of Pupil Premium money.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Written: March 2017

Reviewed and amended: December 2019