



Pool Hayes Primary School

Looked After Children (LAC) Policy



September 2024

We are aware that Looked After Children constitute a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taken into Public Care, but that they are also unique individuals and members of other groups. We will account for this when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatisation.

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

Looked After Children in this school will:

- Receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support.
- Have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities.

Teachers and other staff in this school will:

- Receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and psychological well-being of Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them.
- Plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children.

The Looked After Designated Teacher and Senior Management will:

- Identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place.
- Ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies.

1. Induction

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

- The Head Teacher and the LAC Designated Teacher will meet with all carers and professionals involved with the child before entry to the school.
- If the child has already been in an educational establishment then the LAC Designated Teacher will liaise with their counterpart at the other establishment.
- An individualised plan will be developed by the LAC Designated Teacher, Headteacher, professionals (including Walsall Virtual School and Social Worker) and carers in order to ensure a smooth transition.
- All teachers will be made aware of the child's needs. They will also be informed about the key adults in the child's life such as carers, support workers and other professionals.

2. Pastoral Support

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support the following arrangements are in place:

The LAC Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure that staff are aware of any looked after children in school, know who the carer is, and whether parents have parental rights so they know who should receive copies of newsletters reports etc.
- Liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings.
- Work in partnership with carers, parents or guardians to ensure that Looked After Children receive their entitlement.
- Ensure that any records and plans are kept securely following GDPR regulations and maintained appropriately.
- Provide information to the Governing Body and LA about the progress and outcomes of Looked After Pupils on the school roll.

3. Information

- The LAC Designated Teacher will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and share this information with relevant staff. This will include sharing the Personal Education Plan, if one is already in place. If there is no current PEP, the LAC Designated Teacher will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.
- Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed of strategies in place, or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information, to be determined by the Headteacher.
- Each child will have their own folder containing all essential information and this will be kept in the safeguarding cupboard in the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead's office.
- This information will be shared with all members of the Safeguarding Team.
- If not already in place, an electronic Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be completed at the earliest opportunity, in liaison with The Walsall Virtual School.
- The Headteacher will ensure that any arrangements recorded are adhered to by all staff involved.
- The Headteacher and/or LAC Designated Teacher will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is in order to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school. The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the young person.

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

- Termly Pupil Progress Meetings.
- Termly Tracking of progress and inclusion of interventions if necessary.
- Termly completion of assessments.
- Consultation Evenings with the class teacher will be held termly to discuss progress.

- A written report will be completed in the Spring Term and shared by the Class Teacher.
- Their child's progress will also be collated and closely monitored alongside the progress of those children who are identified as 'Pupil Premium'.
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors termly.
- Termly meetings will be held with carers and any professionals involved with the child in order to review progress / impact / next steps for their individual Personal Education Plan.
- All staff will adhere to the assessment policy when assessing.
- Assessment data and information gathered will be analysed by the Senior Leadership Team to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.
- All children in school including Looked After Children are tracked on a termly basis. Progress is tracked and interventions are arranged as required.
- Looked After Children will be tracked and their progress will be analysed against other children in school to ensure that they are making progress in line with their peers.

3.2 Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

- Attendance data is collated on a weekly basis for all children in school including Looked After Children.
- Attendance is closely monitored by the Safeguarding and Family Support Officer.
- This information will be analysed by Miss Crowley to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so that early interventions can take place.

3.3 Information about the behaviour of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

- All staff will adhere to the school's Behaviour Policy and procedures stated within that policy.
- Achievements (such as Star of the Week, Rainbow Writer, Reader of the Week, Sports Star of the week) will be collated and stored in the child's own folder for future reference.
- This information will be analysed by the LAC Designated Teacher, to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion, so that early intervention can take place.

4. Strategies

4.1 Curriculum

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The LAC Designated Teacher (SENCO/Inclusion Lead) will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff.
- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties.
- Talk to the child
- All staff in school will adhere to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

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. To ensure that under-achievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results.

If progress for a Looked After Child is not as could be expected:

- Interventions will be implemented to address individual need.
- When required, professional agencies involvement will be sought by the LAC Designated Teacher. This may include Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychology or School Nursing Service. Walsall Virtual School may also provide support.

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 by planning alternative but relevant activities.

4.2 Attendance

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the LAC Designated Teacher and/or Safeguarding & Family Support Officer, to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- Walsall Virtual School will be alerted automatically through the ePEP system.
- Attendance is celebrated termly by '100% Attendance Awards'
- Attendance and lateness is tracked on a weekly basis and acted upon if required.

4.3 Behaviour

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children 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 LAC Designated Teacher 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 including within these documents take into account all children's needs.
- If behaviour problems persist, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, and The Virtual School 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 LAC Designated Teacher.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements.

Staff have received training in Emotion Coaching techniques, and the school has achieved the Gold Award as part of the Walsall Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Project' led by Virtual School.

4.4 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. The following strategies are in place to help Looked After Children complete homework tasks as set for their peers.

- Refer to school's Homework Policy.
- We have Teaching Assistant led 'Homework Clubs', which LAC children can be invited to attend.

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

The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiatives 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 Personal Education Plans.
- Discussions with Looked After Children.
- Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of school strategies lies with the Senior Leadership Team.

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 LAC Designated Teacher will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for:

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives.
- Liaising with Social Workers and Walsall Virtual School to ensure all Looked After Children have a Personal 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 EHCP will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible and appropriate.

In addition, school leaders will do everything possible to enable Class Teachers or other appropriate staff are able to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 LAC Designated Teacher is Miss Maria Crowley mcrowley@pool-hayes-p.walsall.sch.uk

The role of the LAC Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school.

The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the LAC Designated Teacher are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the LAC Designated Teacher will:

- Attend training sessions organised by the LA/Walsall Virtual School.
- Cascade this training to school staff.
- Arrange and/or deliver training to all staff, including those newly appointed, on issues affecting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and the ways in which educational disadvantage can be overcome.
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection/Safeguarding Register.
- Work closely with Social Workers and other LA staff to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans which will inform Care Plans.

- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans.

6.2 The Head Teacher and Senior Management

The responsibility for the educational and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Headteacher, although some of the day-to-day tasks may be delegated to other staff. Working with the Senior Management Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Designated Teacher, are enabled to carry them out.

6.3 The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mrs Tahra Hussain.

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of Looked After pupils in the school.
- A comparison of progress and attainment for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils.
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions.

The named governor must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory assessments
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities

6.4 Local Authority

Virtual School Head (VSH)

Under Section 99 Children and Families Act 2014, Local Authorities are required to appoint at least one person who is tasked with promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the Local Authority they work for, including children placed out of authority.

It is the role of the VSH to ensure that there are effective systems in place to:

Maintain an up-to-date roll of its looked after children who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress.

Inform Headteachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the VSH's Local Authority.

Ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP.

Ensure up-to-date, effective and high quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes and that all looked after children, wherever they are placed, have such a PEP.

Ensure the educational achievement of children looked-after by the Local Authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.

Report regularly on the attainment of looked after children through the Local Authority's corporate parenting structures.

VSHs, working with education settings, should implement pupil premium arrangements for looked after children.

The VSH for Walsall is Lorraine Thompson lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk

7. 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.

Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children

Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities, as well as schools, is provided within the document 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children', February 2018.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

The PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority and the school but 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
- * Class Teacher
- The parent (where appropriate)

Walsall Virtual School have determined that the PEPs for all Looked After Children will be produced electronically, using the **ePEP platform**.

Effective and high quality PEPs 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 and IEPs;
- identify developmental and educational needs (short and long term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
- set short term SMART 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 PEP;

The initial PEP

The statutory guidance states that it is the social worker's responsibility to initiate the PEP (supported by the VSH) and that every child and young person looked after should have a PEP in place for the first statutory review of the Care Plan (within 20 days). It is expected that a PEP 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 2013, the Education Support Team for Looked After Children (Walsall Virtual School) will co-ordinate and facilitate the initial PEP.

(See below for guidance on PEP 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 PEP 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 PEP (on ePEP platform).
- Request that the Designated Teacher complete Part B of the PEP (on ePEP platform).
- Request that the Designated Teacher supports the child/young person to complete their section of the PEP
- Attend and chair the initial PEP meeting
- Complete Part C of the PEP
- Collate all parts of the PEP, ensuring all the necessary information is included
- Ensure the completed document is copied and 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 VSH will be consulted.

The LAC Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Arranging for the child or young person to complete their section of the PEP, 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 PEP

The PEP 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 PEP is not possible the Education Manager for Looked After Children must be consulted.

The PEP 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 PEP 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
 - o Part A by the social worker
 - o Part B by the Designated Teacher
 - o The child/young person's views
- Ensuring that Part C is completed at the meeting
- Ensuring that the completed paperwork is collated and distributed to those who attended the meeting.

The VSH will continue to provide support and guidance in respect of the PEP process but will only attend review meetings if there is an identified need to do so.

The VSH will monitor the PEP process, working with those directly involved to ensure PEPs are making a positive contribution to improving educational outcomes.

The PEP process

When a child/young person becomes looked after:

1. Walsall Virtual School will

- i. Contact the designated teacher, social worker and carer(s) to arrange a meeting
- ii. Request that the social worker
 - Completes PEP Part A – Core Information
- iii. Request that the Designated Teacher
 - Completes PEP Part B – Core Information

- Ensures the child/young person has opportunity to complete their section of the PEP

iv. Identify, consult with additional educational professionals and invite them to the PEP meeting if appropriate

v. Ensure that carers, and if appropriate parents, are invited to the PEP meeting

The initial PEP meeting:

1. The meeting should focus on

i. Sharing relevant information

ii. Acknowledging strengths and achievements

iii. Agreeing SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) – these may be targets already identified in existing plans eg SEN support plans

iv. Considering longer term goals and identifying any actions necessary to support progress towards those goals

v. Identifying any barriers to progress and agreeing appropriate action to reduce the impact on learning

vi. Considering how the Pupil Premium could support the action plan

vii. Agreeing a date to review the PEP

2. The discussion and decisions made at the meeting should be recorded using the section of the PEP form headed

• Part C – Review and Plan

3. The Virtual School will ensure the PEP is completed, circulated to everyone invited to the meeting.

Implementing the plan

The designated teacher should ensure the PEP 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 PEP is reviewed within the agreed timescales – see additional guidance above.

Signed: