

Looked After Children Policy

(including those children previously in care)

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Looked After Children Policy (Including those children previously in care)

1.0 Objectives

<school name> is committed to helping every child achieve the highest educational standards he or she possibly can, including raising their aspirations and recognising their potential. We understand the vital role we play in promoting social and emotional development including positively promoting the raising of a child's self-esteem. We recognise that there may be reasons which may affect the behaviour of children and understand that this is often a form of communication which may need a more personalised response or intervention.

We aim to fulfil our role as corporate parent to promote and support the education of looked after children by asking the question **'Would this be good enough for my child?'**

We will work alongside, and with, partners including the Plymouth Virtual School to make sure that looked after children and previously looked after children:

Enjoy and achieve

- Feel stable and supported in an environment that values education and believes in all children
- Participate in a wide range of out of school activities, including volunteering
- Narrow the gap so that their attainment is in line or better than their peers

Stay safe

- Are happy at school
- Feel safe and secure at school
- Are advised and signposted to the most appropriate sources of support

Are healthy

- Are supported to access a wide range of positive activities to promote their physical and/or mental health

Achieve economic well-being

- Make successful and sustained transitions to secondary school
- Develop the skills necessary to live in the 21st Century [independently] and be responsible citizens

Make a positive contribution

- Develop their confidence and self-esteem
- Have a voice and contribute to decisions that affect them including through the PEP process

2.0 Definition

'In care' is a term that refers to children in the care of the Local Authority. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members, and sometimes with their parents. Each trust school recognises that children in care may have very specific needs.

Previously Looked After Child – is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because he/she is now subject to an Adoption, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order.

3.0 Rationale

Looked-after children and previously looked after children as a group are no less able than their peers but they often underachieve. As their lives have frequently been characterised by instability, many have spent too much time out of school. As a result, they can fall behind and in the past, have often not received the help and support they needed to catch up. Aspiration is frequently lacking due to earlier life experiences, so the school and other care professionals play a key role in engendering ambition and creating opportunities to achieve the absolute best. If we accept 'average' that is all we will achieve.

Looked-after children and previously looked after children are a priority for admission, and **<school name>** will follow the **<admission authority>** admission criteria, admitting students as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher for Looked-after children and previously looked after children is: **XXXXXXXXXXXXXX**

The Designated Governor for Looked-after children and previously looked after children is: **XXXXXXXXXXXXXX**

The Governing Body will:

- ensure that the school / MAT admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked-after children and previously looked after children according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and statutory guidance for Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- appoint a qualified teacher as the Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked-after children and previously looked after children

- ensure that the DT receives training, including understanding trauma and mental health training
- ensure that the DT and staff receive appropriate and on-going support for their role working with Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- liaise with the Head Teacher, DT, SENCO and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked-after children and previously looked after children care are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked-after children and previously looked after children who links with the DT
- ensure there are arrangements in place to keep themselves informed about provision for, and attainment of Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- receive and approve an annual report on numbers, achievements and progress of looked after children within the school and work with the school leadership team to act on any issues raised by the DT
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked-after children and previously looked after children
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures have regard to the needs of Looked-after children and previously looked after children, in particular
 - Oversubscription criteria/Admission Arrangements
 - Staff Discipline, conduct and grievance procedures
 - Behaviour/discipline policy (including use of exclusions)
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
 - SEND Policy
 - Supporting pupils with medical conditions
 - Equality information and objectives

The Designated Teacher's role and responsibilities:

- welcome and ensure a smooth transition for the child and their carer/parent
- promote a culture of high expectation amongst all staff in the school and one in which Looked-after children and previously looked after children believe they can succeed
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- be a source of advice and facilitate training for staff in developing their understanding of the factors which can affect how children in care learn and develop including of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss, separation and trauma (attachment awareness)
- to keep an up-to-date list of all looked after children and previously looked after children including those in the care of Other LAs
- record and monitor academic progress, attendance and personal development of looked after children and report to Virtual School Head Teacher (using eGOV)

- monitor attendance and exclusions weekly of looked after children and in the event of any exclusion make contact with the Plymouth Virtual School Team and Social worker outlining reasons why the child has been excluded
- liaise pro-actively with the Virtual School Team and Social Care Team particularly where the pupil is experiencing difficulties at school or is at risk of exclusion
- lead on the termly development, implementation and review of each looked after child's Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to provide additional, personalised support as identified in the PEP for looked after children
- review the on-going use of Pupil Premium Plus within a needs-led approach while recognising that larger allocations cannot be seen as a long-term option
- Maintain an oversight of the Pupil Premium allocation for Previously Looked After children and report to governors on how the funding has been used and its impact
- make or support applications for Personal Education Allowance for looked after children to further improve educational outcomes
- ensure specific interventions and targeted support are used to make sure personal education targets are met (particularly in English and Maths)
- attend relevant training which must be regularly updated (at least annually)
- establish good communication with parents and carers and make sure that they understand the importance of supporting learning at home and that they are provided with copies of the most recent PEP
- promote good communication between all those involved in the child's life and ensure appropriate school staff are aware of all relevant information, including the use of factfiles/timelines to understand the trauma and losses a child may have experienced
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential/personal information on a need-to-know basis
- ensure that a member of staff attends care reviews, whenever possible
- ensure that each Looked-after and previously looked after child has an identified member of staff they can talk to. This need not be the DT (but should link closely), but should be based on the child's own wishes
- provide additional support for transition between schools' key stages and liaise with new DT
- link with SENCO to ensure any Special Educational Needs are assessed on arrival and that appropriate provision is made and ensure that looked after children are on the agenda for planning meetings with the school Educational Psychologist
- identify signs of potential issues relating to mental health (and complete SDQs as part of the PEP process)
- celebrate achievements including nominating our looked after children for the annual You Can do it! Celebrations

5.0 Confidentiality statement: <school specific>

6.0 Related documents:

DfE Promoting the Education Of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

DfE Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

7.0 Review dates¹

This policy will be reviewed in January 2024