

Deer Park Primary School

Policy for Looked After Children (LAC)



Context

As Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children and Young People Looked After and to help them achieve their full potential. We recognise that there are crucial educational issues for young people Looked After and that as many as 50% of Derbyshire Looked After Young People leave school with no qualifications, compared with about 8% of all Derbyshire 16 year olds. We recognise that there are many barriers that prevent them achieving their full potential and we will do our best to reduce the barriers to achievement. As Corporate Parents we want to make a difference to the children in our school, by supporting their education in the fullest way we can, asking ourselves the question '**Is this good enough for my child?**'

1. Intent

The aims of Deer Park Primary School are to:

- Ensure the school's policies and procedures are followed for Looked After Children as for all pupils.
- Ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that Looked After Children take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After Children are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensure that Looked After Children are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

2. Who are Looked After Children?

Under the Children Act 2004, 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. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents.
- Children who are the subjects of a care order or interim care order.
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection.
- 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.

The term '**in care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts; 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 – they may live in foster care, in a children 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 or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

3. Implementation - Role and Responsibilities

3.1 Rationale for role and responsibilities;

Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and there is considerable educational under achievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience;

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in;

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- Under achievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. As corporate parents the school has a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by;

- Giving priority to education.
- Listening to pupils.
- Providing stability and continuity.
- Taking corporate responsibility.
- Promoting inclusion.
- Raising standards.
- Intervening early
- Celebrating success.

3.2 The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the school has a current policy for Looked After Children.
- Ensure that all Governors are made aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children are met.
- Ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, examinations, extra-curricular activities.
- The Head Teacher will:
- Be an advocate for Looked After Children within the school in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances.
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Looked After Children on both the child and the rest of the community.
- Know who are the Looked After Children and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- Monitor the educational progress of all Looked After Children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of under achievement, absence or internal truancy, or other similar concern.
- Attend relevant training about Looked After Children.
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice when appropriate.
- 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.

- □Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals.
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if an Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual pupils, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil.
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children.
- Ensure that all teaching staff are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by Looked After Children and that they understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining high expectations for their educational achievement.
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other events.
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for Looked After Children.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when an Looked After Children transfers to another educational placement.
- Contribute information to Looked After Children reviews when required.
- Report to the Governing Body on Looked After Children and inform of relevant policy and practice development.
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to Parent's Evenings etc.
- Prepare reports for Governors meetings to include:
 - The number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
 - Their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - Their attainment compared to other pupils.
 - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Attend Governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. Looked After Children are six to eight times more likely to have a Statement of Special Education Needs than the general school population.

The person responsible in school for the care and education of Looked After Children is:

Annette Lupton

The link governor is: **Jo Richardson**

3.4 Impact

All teaching staff will follow best practice, and:

- Follow procedures in relation to Looked After Children.
- Work in partnership with other agencies and services to support children's education, including The Virtual School.
- Liaise with the Head of The Virtual School and Education Support Officers to ensure the child is achieving their potential.
- Keep the Head Teacher informed about an Looked After Children's progress.

- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.
- Positively promote the raising of an Looked After Children's self esteem.
- Ensure any Looked After Children are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the policy and guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests
- for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher where an Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times.
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/student as appropriate.

4. Admissions

The school, as the Admission Authority, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against Looked After Children. Due to care placement changes, Looked After Children may enter mid-term. It is vital that such children are provided with a positive welcome. If necessary the school may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new student settle.

5. Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. This Looked After Children policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure that the school makes appropriate provision for all Looked After Children.

6. Allocation of Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for Looked After Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

7. Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

The social worker for the Looked After Children should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of an Looked After Children joining the school, or of entering care and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each Looked After Children's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. Looked After Children will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker and the young person's views should be sought by the Class Teacher and noted on the PEP.

8. Record Keeping

The Class Teacher / Head Teacher will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Head Teacher will also know about any Looked After Children from other authorities. It is important that the school flags Looked After Children's status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

9. Partnership with Parents/Carers and Care Workers

The school firmly believes in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

10. Links with External Agencies/Organisations

The school also recognises the important contribution that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual Looked After Children:

- Looked After Children teams.
- The Virtual School
- Educational psychologists and others from local authority SEN services.
- Medical officers.
- CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services).
- Educational Welfare Officers.
- Social care worker/community care worker.

11. Looked After Children Policy Review and Evaluation

The school considers the Looked After Children policy to be important and undertakes a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The Head Teacher and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and where appropriate, will agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any ongoing concerns. These will be shared with staff, carers and pupils as appropriate.

The next review of this policy is in 2 years' time in 2025

Reviewed by Annette Lupton Date: 01/09/2023