



St John's Church of England Primary School

Looked After Children Policy

Written with reference to the Herts Model School Policy for Looked After Children

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE NUMBER:

CSF4093

PUBLICATION DATE: APRIL 2015

ISSUE NO: 5

Date Approved:

November 2016

Headteacher:

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Chair of Governors:

Mrs Julie Griffiths

Review Date:

November 2017

Love, Respect, Value

St John's Church of England Primary School is committed to high expectations for all and to embracing equality.

Purpose

'Loving your neighbour', 'Respecting each other' and 'Valuing Diversity' sit at the heart of St John's school and reflects our Christian ethos of valuing every child as a unique child of God. 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 individuals and members of other groups. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we take this into account when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatization.

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 make good or better progress, 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
- ensure that school staff have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on
- ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan or ePEP with SMART targets that will promote progress
- ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how the funding is spent with outcomes evidenced
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc

- Hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date, used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and progress
- Report to the Governing Body, each term, on the outcomes for children looked after

1. Induction

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

- Children and their carers will be invited into school to meet with the Head Teacher in the first instance.
- A second visit will be arranged. During this second visit the child and carers will be shown around school, introduced to staff and introduced to their prospective class teacher and peers.
- At least one more visit into school to spend time with their class teacher and peers will be encouraged before they are admitted full time. During this visit the child will be supported by a carer or known adult for as long as necessary to ensure the child feels safe and secure.
- The Headteacher and/or the 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 Head Teacher will liaise with the Head Teacher of this establishment.
- An individual plan for transition into the school will be developed by the Head Teacher, designated teacher, professionals and carers to ensure a smooth transition.
- All teachers will be made aware of the child's needs and key adults in their life such as carers, support workers and other professionals.

1.2 Work with Individual Looked After Children

- To discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To ensure that the Pupil Voice section of the Hertfordshire Personal Education Plan or ePEP is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the student are faithfully represented in the PEP;
- To ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new child looked after into the school;
- To develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers;
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

2. Pastoral Support

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

The SENCO, the designated teacher for Looked After Children 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.
- ensure photographs of key people who have authorisation to collect the child from school are displayed discretely in the classroom, on the staffroom wall and in the main office to safeguard the child.
- liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings
- work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after children receive their entitlement.
- ensure that records and plans are kept and maintained appropriately
- provide information to the Governing Body and The Trust about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils on the school roll
- secure training for the designated teacher or others as appropriate to ensure that the school can meet the needs of looked after pupils

3. Information

- The SENCO (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 pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the 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 by the Designated Teacher 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 SENCO.
- Each child will have their own folder containing all essential information and this will be kept in the safeguarding cupboard in the Headteacher's office.
- The information on this sheet will be shared with all members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If not already in place a Personal Education Plan (see appendix 1) will be completed at the earliest opportunity
- The SENCO (designated teacher) will ensure that any arrangements recorded are adhered to by all staff involved.

- The SENCO (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.

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 data / other appropriate assessment
- Consultation Evenings with the class teacher will be held to discuss progress
- A written report will be completed by the Summer Term by the class teacher
- Their progress will also be collated and closely monitored with children who are identified as 'pupil premium' or 'pupil premium plus'
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors termly
- Termly meeting will be held with carers and all professional involved with the child in order to review progress / impact / next steps of individual Personal Education Plan (PEP see appendix 1)
- All staff will adhere to the assessment policy
- This information 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 if required.
- All children including Looked After Children have 'outstanding' progress targets set at the beginning of the year.
- Looked After Children will be tracked and their progress will be analysed against other children in school to ensure they are making progress in line with their peers.

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.
- Any absence is followed up and if absence falls below 97% carers and professionals will be invited into school to meet with the Head Teacher.
 - All staff will adhere to the Attendance policy
 - This information will be analysed by The SENCO (designated teacher) to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.

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

- All staff will adhere to the behaviour and discipline policy and procedures stated within that policy will be followed.
 - Behaviour logs will be kept by the class teacher as required – including positive and challenging behaviours

- Incident books will be completed if required
- Achievements will be collated in the child's own folder for future reference
- This information will be analysed by The SENCO (designated teacher) to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion so 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 SENCO (designated teacher) 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 Needs 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 is not as could be expected:

- Interventions will be completed including counselling/ well-being and academic interventions
- When required professional agencies involvement will be sought by the SENCO (designated teacher)

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 SENCO (designated teacher) to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- The Virtual School will be alerted
- 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 SENCO (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 and discipline policy. The strategies including within these documents take into account all children's needs.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, PRS 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 SENCO (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.

4.4 Home Learning

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete home learning, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so. The following strategies are in place to help Looked After Children complete home learning tasks as set for their peers.

- Refer to home learning policy
- In the future as the school grows we will offer support for home learning during 'Quiet Club'.

4.5 Extra-Curricular Activities

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school-based activities because of poor relationships with their peers, for example. 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 SENCO (designated teacher) will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities
- The 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 initiative will be monitored and evaluated by:

- Collection and analysis of information
- Discussion with school staff, carers, Social Workers and staff from 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 Designated Teacher will be the named contact for colleagues in Children's Services and devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for:

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives
- Liaising with Social Workers 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 Statements of SEN will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible and appropriate.

- Ensuring the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school roll to the Virtual School as requested – Progress and attainment data submitted each term.

In addition, school management will do everything possible to enable class teachers or other appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Designated Teacher is The SENCO

The role of the 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 Designated Teacher are implicit in the above sections of this policy.

In addition, the Designated Teacher will:

- Attend training sessions organised by CPD providers
- 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 Register
- Work closely with Social Workers and other other 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 Headteacher 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 Ann Handley

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 test scores 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
- Pupil destinations

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

The named Governor is encouraged to support the Quality Assurance Process for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after if offered to ensure and confirm the schools' best practice.

The named Governor will be expected to have completed the iLearn on-line learning module on the Education of Children Looked After (Governors edition). This training may be accessed via the Virtual School.

7. Monitoring and 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.

Signed and date	The policy document must be signed and dated by the head teacher and chair of governing body. A review date should also be stated.
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The next review will be Autumn 2017

Legislation

Children Act 1989

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

