Designated Teacher Policy for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children

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Staff:	SLT
Notes:	Non-Statutory
Review Cycle:	Annual -Trust Mandated
Next Review Date:	**Spring 2027**

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Collins

a member of Learning Partners academy trust

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a child 'looked after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. This includes children who were adopted, placed under a special guardianship order or subject to a child arrangements order.

'Looked After Children' (LAC) are registered pupils that are in the care of a local authority or who are provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

A previously looked after child (PLAC) is a child who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because the child is the subject to a child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them, a special guardianship or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

Sandfield Primary School recognises that Looked After children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Sandfield Primary School is committed to its role in ensuring that 'Looked After' and 'Previously Looked After' children are able to feel safe, to be healthy, to achieve and to feel that they are supported in order to be successful in the community.

School Commitment

LAC are at greater risk of not realising their full potential and having poorer outcomes in terms of physical health, emotional health and educational attainment. They are also at greater risk of expulsion compared with their peers. Sandfield Primary School is committed to ensuring the welfare and achievement of LAC and PLAC children in the following ways:

- Providing a safe and secure environment is provided, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children
- Supporting our looked after children to allow them every opportunity to reach their potential, achieve more than they thought possible, to enjoy learning and to be an active member of our school community, including participation in clubs
- Promote attendance and inclusion
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Providing early intervention and prioritizing actions
- Promoting health and well –being
- Minimising exclusions and promoting stability
- Ensuring a suitable member of staff is trained and appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (Claire McIllroy)
- Ensuring that the designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible
- Promotes communication between staff, parents, carers and guardians and to ensure that the child is listened to
- To ensure that all policies and procedures are followed for LAC and PLAC children as they would for all children
- To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers are kept fully aware of progress and attainment**. The Virtual school head (VSH)** is a local authority officer responsible for

promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

- All LAC will have a **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** developed with the school, the child, the child's social worker and it forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Pupil Voice

- LAC/PLAC will be supported to express their views during PEPs and school meetings.
- Their preferences will inform support plans and pastoral arrangements.
- Staff will ensure children understand decisions made about them in an age-appropriate way.

Pupil Premium Plus

- PP funding will be used to meet the individual needs identified in each child's Persoanlised Education Plan
- Spending decisions will be made collaboratively with the Virtual School.
- Impact will be reviewed termly and recorded in the PEP

Trauma-Informed Practice and Emotional Wellbeing

- Staff will use trauma-informed approaches to support emotional regulation.
- The school will provide access to pastoral support, mentoring, or counselling where appropriate.
- Staff will be aware of attachment needs and how these may affect behaviour and learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below
- It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Local Governing Body

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children
- The school will assess the impact of support for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children through ongoing monitoring of progress, attendance, wellbeing and targeted interventions, including the use of Pupil Premium Plus. Summary outcomes will be shared with governors through termly updates and the annual Designated Teacher report to enable effective oversight of provision and outcomes

- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met

Designated Teacher

The designated teacher is Claire McIlIroy (DHT)

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the LAC/PLAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- Ensure that each LAC/PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC/PLAC that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs and PLACs may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attend training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding LAC and PLAC

Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all students
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.

Training

- The Designated Teacher will undertake regular training on LAC/PLAC needs
- All staff will receive awareness training on attachment trauma and barriers faced by LAC/PLAC
- Training will be refreshed annually or when significant guidance changes

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.

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff. A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC/YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly. Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition. It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Department of Education’s published document ‘Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children’ 2018