



Looked After Children Policy

Introduction

The governing body of Pulford Lower School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory local authority guidance “Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children” (February 2018).

Objectives

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
- ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of the child’s progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practical, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Definition

‘Looked After’ is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. 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 or sometimes with their parents.

These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

Looked After Children may (or may not) have some of the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others.
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues.
- poor attachments to others.



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- have a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

The governing board of Pulford Lower School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children – Mrs Rees
- Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children.
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group.

Responsibility of the Head teacher

- 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 (Mr Heather).
- 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.

Responsibility of The virtual school head (VSH):

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for LAC.

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- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
 - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
 - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
 - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
 - Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher (Mrs Rees) should:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.

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Encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;

- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA
- Role and responsibilities of all staff
- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children

Role and responsibility of the Governing Board

The governing board of this school will:

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons). Mrs Morley is the named governor and also reports on children with SEND, EAL and Pupil Premium children.



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- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

Other Roles and Responsibilities:

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and PLAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PLAC.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and PLAC and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and PLAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and PLAC.

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 (PEP) 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 Looked After Child. 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



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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 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.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked After Children.

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Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and effectively with Looked After Children. Examples include : attachment training; SEND; Exclusions; Managing and challenging behaviour; Safeguarding

All training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC and PLAC safe.

LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health. The school will follow the school's mental health policy to support children.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are 'more-able' will be informed of those Looked After Children who have particular abilities or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

Exclusions

Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.

The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.



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Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Pupils with SEND

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.

The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that LAC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

Home-school liaison

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their potential.

Parent/Carer Consultation Meetings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Monitoring and Evaluation

LAC will be regularly monitored in school as well as with the relevant outside agencies.

This policy will be monitored annually by the designated teacher and reviewed every three years with governors or sooner if there are changes in legislation.

Policy endorsed by the Governing Board Spring 2023

Signed: Chair of the Governing Board

Equal opportunities

All young people will be treated equally, regardless of disability, race, creed or gender.

The policy will be applied regardless of culture, faith or belief.

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