



**Castlecroft Primary School**

# **Policy on Promoting the Education of Looked After Children**

**Designated Teacher:** Mrs S Birbeck-Simpson

**Head Teacher:** Mr A Dyll

**Policy Updated:** January 2022

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Castlecroft Primary School believes that in partnership with Wolverhampton City Council as Corporate Parents, and other key partners, we have a legal, moral and professional duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked after Children (LAC).

*The terms 'looked-after children' and 'children in care' include children placed by a local authority with family members, foster carers or in a residential care home. They also include those placed in care through a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or by a voluntary agreement with the child's parents under section 20 of the Act. The terms can also be used to refer to children entered into police protection and those involved in the youth justice system.*

We know that a secure and successful education is a major factor in improving the life chances of LAC and Care Leavers. However we recognise that, nationally, pupils in care have significantly underachieved compared with their peers. We intend, through this policy, to work toward closing that achievement gap. We promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement of looked after children in our school. In pursuance of this we will hold ourselves and our partners to account by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

## 2. Background legislation

This policy is based on the following legislation:

1. *Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the Act") and The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.*
2. *The Local Authority statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children – see link below.*
3. *The Children and Families Act 2014, which requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer to make sure that its duty is properly discharged - referred to as the Virtual School Head.*

## 3. How will the impact of the policy be evidenced?

The impact of the policy will be seen through improvements in the following key outcomes for Looked after children:

- ✓ Reduction in school exclusions
- ✓ Improved school attendance
- ✓ Improved attainment at statutory assessment stages
- ✓ Improved rates of progress and attainment
- ✓ Improved quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- ✓ The views of children & young people (as recorded in PEPs and captured through the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and wider consultation

#### **4. Partnership working**

We will work together with key local authority departments including the Virtual School Head (VSH) and Corporate Parenting & Education (COPE) team, along with education providers and other relevant agencies, to enable the best possible outcomes for Looked after pupils through flexible and proactive partnership working.

#### **5. The Governing Body**

The governing body will:

- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for LAC and that (s)he is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities in line with statutory guidance (see link below)
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the progress of LAC is prioritised and supported in line with statutory responsibilities
- Nominate a governor for Looked after Children. The nominated governor will take a leading responsibility for the challenge and support of the school in raising achievement for LAC pupils and attend relevant training. The Nominated Governor should have a termly meeting with the Designated Teacher, with a clear agenda, to address school improvement issues related to LAC. They will also ensure that an annual report (as a minimum) is provided to the governing body by the Designated Teacher - see Appendix for suggested report template. The nominated governor will present this report to the wider governing body in partnership with the designated teacher.

#### **6. The Senior Leadership Team**

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that LAC are prioritised in school policy & procedure and in the allocation of resources, in line with Ofsted and DfE guidance, to ensure that LAC access the best of what the school has to offer
- Ensure that LAC are given top priority in school admissions, in line with national statutory guidance and the Wolverhampton Admissions policy. However, we must ensure that the provision is right for the child and, if there are issues, school will meet with social care the Virtual School Head (VSH)/COPE and other key partners as appropriate, to resolve these issues
- Consider every possible alternative to a temporary or permanent exclusion, in line with national, local and school admissions policies, due to the disproportionate effect that exclusion can have on Looked after Children. Instead, we will work together proactively with all key partners including the local authority, using every resource in our control (including alternative provision where appropriate), to solve problems.
- Not resort to unofficial exclusions to resolve behavioural or other issues

- In the event of a serious issue, which might otherwise lead to permanent exclusion, the child may be placed on a fixed-term exclusion and an emergency review of the PEP and other relevant plans / provision will be called and attended by key personnel, e.g. the child's carer, social worker and (where appropriate) representatives from COPE, 5-18 Early Help Service and/or Youth Offending Team, to resolve the issue
- If we feel that we are unable to meet the child's needs, we will work with external agencies to ensure that any special educational needs, including social emotional and mental health needs, are assessed in accordance with the SEN/D Code of Practice (2015). This should include, where appropriate, referral for a statutory education, health and care needs assessment
- On occasion, by shared agreement and in the best interests of the child, a managed move to another provision may be considered in order to avoid a permanent exclusion.
- Where a modified timetable may be in the best interests of the child, this will firstly be discussed and (if appropriate) agreed in a review of the Personal Education Plan, thereby taking into account the views of the child, carer and social worker
- Take a proactive approach to sourcing the DfE-recommended first day provision for fixed term exclusion for LAC, in view of the additional pressures that exclusion can put on care placements
- Be aware that looked after children are more likely to have special educational needs than most, work proactively to identify any SEN effecting Looked after Children, and make appropriate provision in accordance with the SEN/D Code of Practice (2015)
- Ensure that LAC have an appropriate, 25-hour offer of education, other than for a fixed period which has been agreed with carer and social worker as being in the child's best interests (such as part of a transition plan) and recorded / reviewed in the PEP
- Make our school "attachment aware" and fully able to meet each child's learning, health & wellbeing needs, by ensuring that key staff keep up-to-date with relevant policy and legislation and attend relevant training, such as that provided by the Virtual School Head (VSH) / COPE. We will ensure that key staff members are aware of statutory guidance in this area.

## **7. The Designated Teacher**

We will have a Designated Teacher for LAC, who is a member of the senior leadership team and is therefore able to affect changes in policy and procedure where appropriate. The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for all children in this school who are in care, ensuring that their voice is heard and acted upon
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis and in line with school safeguarding and information-sharing protocols.
- Maintain an up to date record of all Looked after Children who are on the school roll

- Be a central point of contact, working with any previous educational settings to ensure a smooth induction and transition into school
- Liaise with the child, carer & social worker to ensure that a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed and reviewed within statutory timescales (and more often if necessary) with SMART targets to support accelerated progress
- Ensure that Pupil Premium and other allocated funding is used in the most appropriate way to support each Looked after Child's individual learning targets, as agreed in their PEP meeting with the child's carer, social worker and (where appropriate / necessary) VSH/COPE representative.
- Contribute to LAC reviews, SEND reviews and other meetings as required & appropriate
- Fulfil school safeguarding protocols, be alert to any child protection issues, and know what action to take.
- Inform the child's carer and social worker when a child in care is absent from school without notification or excluded
- Attend relevant training on safeguarding and Looked after Children, keep up to date with relevant legislation & guidance and cascade to school staff as appropriate.
- Provide in-school training for school staff around attachment, trauma and recovery and its implications for behaviour management.
- Provide support and CPD to staff, with a knowledge of the emotional impact that children who are looked after can have on trusted adults, including their class-based staff.
- Provide the Virtual School Head / COPE Team with termly data on the performance, attendance and attainment of Wolverhampton LAC
- Meet with the Nominated Governor or Chair of Governors termly and report to the Governing Body annually, as a minimum, on the performance of their Looked after pupils, without naming individual children
- Ensure well planned and informed transitions when a child changes school, with timely information sharing.
- Ensure that the statutory guidance on the role of the Designated Teacher is embedded within practice

## **8. All School Staff**

All school staff will:

- Ensure a safe & secure environment in which vulnerable pupils are able to flourish and grow and high aspirations are encouraged
- Seek advice from designated teacher regarding induction, own CPD and any interventions, classroom environment adaptations etc.
- Be sensitive to the needs of LAC, including confidentiality issues
- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care

## **9. Arrangements for Review**

This policy will be reviewed as to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

**Appendix:**

**The Designated Teacher’s Annual Report to the Governing Body on the Progress and Support of Looked after Children (LAC) in School**

**Purpose of Report**

This report fulfils the statutory duty for the Designated Teacher for LAC to provide an (at least) annual report to the governing body, outlining the progress of the school’s Looked-after pupils, and the support that is provided for them

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of areas for discussion and should be used to inform a termly discussion between the Designated Teacher and Nominated Governor for LAC, or Chair of Governors, as well as a template for the annual report.

This Report Covers (Term & Year):				
Name of School				
Name of Designated Teacher for LAC				
Name of Nominated Governor for LAC (or Chair of Governors)				
Designated Teacher’s position within the staffing structure				
What training has the designated Teacher and/or other school staff received relating to LAC and vulnerable pupils in the last year?				
How many LAC attend the school, and how many of these are Looked after by Wolverhampton City Council?				
How many have a statement of SEN or EHCP, and for what type of need? How many have identified SEN, but do not have a statement / EHCP?				
Do all LAC have up to date, high quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs)?  If not, please provide reason / comment				
What is the current attainment of each LAC?  Please do not use names and add rows as needed	Child	English	Maths	Is this below, at or above expected levels?
	1			
	2			
	3			

Are these pupils making expected (or better) levels of progress, and if not, what actions are in place to address this?	Child	Expected Progress +?	Reason / Comment
	1		
	2		
	3		
<p>Is attendance less than 95% for any of these pupils? If so, please give reason / comment and current actions to addresses this.</p>			
<p>Are any of these pupils following modified or part-time timetables? If so, please add reasons / comment and plans in place to extend their provision to full-time</p>			
<p>Have any LAC pupils had fixed-term or permanent exclusions? If yes, what has been done to support reintegration and prevent further exclusion?</p>			
<p>Which other agencies has school worked with to support these children (including, but not limited to, local authority stakeholders)?</p>			
<p>How is the school using its Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) allocation to support LAC?</p>			
<p>Any other information?</p>			