



Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children Policy



February 2019

Designated LAC teacher (2018-19): **Ellie Frost**

Designated inclusion governor (2018-19): **Sandy Blackledge**

Vision & Aims:

Loughton School..... Inspiring Children

Loughton School is **committed to developing the potential** of each member of the school community in a happy, supportive and caring environment. Our aim is that every child will achieve **their highest possible academic attainment** at this school, providing a sound foundation for future educational, social and occupational opportunities. However, we recognise that **every child is unique** and will have talents and skills that cannot necessarily be fostered academically or measured through standard forms of testing.

Introduction

Who are our Looked After Children?

Children and young people become 'Looked After' either if they have been taken into Care by the local authority (subject to a care order), or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement).

They might be living:

- **With foster parents**
- **At home with their parents under the supervision of social services**
- **A small number in residential children's homes**

They might have been placed in care voluntarily by parents struggling to cope. Or, children's services may have intervened because a child was at significant risk of harm. A child will stop being 'looked after' when they are either adopted, return home or turn 18. The local authority will continue to support children leaving care at 18 until they reach 21.

LAC will have a care manager who arranges their care plan.

At Loughton School we are committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This policy sets out the school's approach to Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children as part of its commitment to encourage and support all pupils to reach their full potential.

This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of Looked After Children, when compared with their peers. Research shows that nationally, LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances.

At Loughton School, we are therefore committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfE Circular 0269/2000 and DfE/DOH Guidance 2000 and the Children Act (2004). The Children Act places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential". The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- i. prioritising education;
- ii. having high expectations;
- iii. inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes;
- iv. achieving continuity and stability;
- v. early intervention – priority action; and

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- vi. listening to children.

The Guidance introduced two key measures:

- To ensure designated Teachers are nominated in every school
- To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all Looked After Children.

This governing body is committed to ensuring that a designated teacher, usually within the inclusion team, and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher should:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for the child and carer/s (and parent/s where possible). Note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed (within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer/s (and parent/s if possible), in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any Individual Educational Plan (IEP), statement or Educational Health Care Plan (EHC), Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), career plan or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed
- ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff, normally a Learning Mentor, that they can talk to;
- ensure entry to statutory tests for all Looked After Children;
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff and governors receive relevant information and training;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- ensure the child is added to the pupil premium database and their progress is tracked to help improve attainment and close the gap between their group and their peers;
- attend training as required to keep fully informed of the latest policies and developments regarding LAC;
- ensure that there is a smooth transition between schools on entry and exit;.
- complete the Pupil Premium Grant Funding Access form to apply for additional funding from the local authority;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning;
- report any safeguarding/child protection concerns to the Child Protection lead in school and the named social worker;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

Roles of Responsibilities of all Staff

The role and responsibility of all staff is as follows:

- as with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children;

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- be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
 - using Insight, our assessment system, to monitor the progress of the Looked After Child to help improve attainment and close the gap between their group and their peers;
 - liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulty.

Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body

The governing body of this school will:

- ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions;
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- ensure the Inclusion Governor links with the Designated Teacher and receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body;
- for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned;
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.
- ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school
 - The National Curriculum
 - Additional educational support where this is needed. Extra curricular activities
 - Work experience and careers guidance.

Training

The Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and Professional Development Co-ordinator, normally a member of the senior leadership team, will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the guidance from the DfE and DoH (as above).

Monitoring

To be monitored by the inclusion governor and reported annually the T&L Governors.