



STOKES WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

AIM

To ensure that looked after children, through their education, enjoy and achieve, are healthy, stay safe, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being.

Our Principles

- We are corporate parents legally because we are in loco parentis. As corporate parents we accept that we have to be challenged by the question 'is this good enough for my child?'
- To work together, overcome differences between professionals and be child and solution focused.
- Our looked after children will have timely access to education that meets their needs. No looked after children will be without an appropriate education.
- Our looked after children will not miss or be excluded from education: we will always work to find solutions and alternatives for individual looked after children.
- Our looked after children will feel safe in school and our aspiration is that they will also enjoy learning. A child who does not feel safe will not learn. How children feel about their school is important to us: we will listen and respond.

To whom does the policy apply?

All staff, individuals and organisations, providing or supporting the education of our looked after children.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Designated Teacher

Our school will nominate a member of the senior leadership team to be Designated Teacher for looked after children, the Pastoral Lead Teacher. The Designated Teacher will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them as per statutory guidance '*The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Children In Care*'

If parts of the designated teacher role are delegated, this will be made clear to all those who are involved with the child.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Know all the looked after children in school and those who have recently left care and who may therefore, still need support
- Make sure the young person's voice is heard and responded to.
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for the achievement of looked after children
- Have sufficient up to date knowledge and training about the education, care and health [physical and psychological] needs of looked after children. To respond proactively, support and challenge staff and seek support and advice from professionals if they reach the limits of their professional knowledge.
- Ensure each looked after children has an up to date, complete and high quality Personal Education Plan [PEP] every term.
- Ensure appropriate interventions and assessments are carried out so barriers to learning are overcome and record these plans in the PEP
- Make sure that looked after children are prioritised in support arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- Work closely with other agencies, sharing information as appropriate
- Ensure that there are well supported plans for transitions including a plan for education.
- Attend training
- Keep governors and SLT up to date with the needs, issues and outcomes for looked after children via a termly report and any other necessary communication.
- Ensure statutory funding (Pupil Premium Plus) is spent effectively and contributes to rapidly improving the education of all looked after children in the school.

The Designated Teacher will also

- Ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively, that information is shared only on a need to know basis and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account
- Establish good working relationships and communications with foster carers and key workers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend school events, meetings and reviews
- Seek and prioritise meetings with and make referrals to appropriate external agencies whenever the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is at risk of being excluded
- Provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required
- Ensure the transfer of records without delay, if a looked after child moves school.

Governors

Our governing body will nominate a governor (SEND governor) who will:

- Ensure that the needs of looked after children are taken into account at a school management level.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training about looked after children.
- Ensure that the needs and outcomes of looked after children are incorporated in policy decisions wherever relevant
- Ensure the school's work with looked after children is reviewed termly by the SLT and governing body.
- Undertake appropriate training

Senior Leadership Team will:

- Listen to and take account of the views of looked after children
- Regularly review provision and outcomes for looked after children
- Follow guidance and statutory guidance on admissions, exclusions etc
- Prioritise looked after children in resource decisions and ensure that resources directly targeted at looked after children [Pupil Premium Plus, money for special needs etc.] are used directly for them.
- Work with, support and challenge wider partnerships in providing the best possible educational provision and support for our looked after children.
- Ensure looked after children have access to the best of what the school has to offer and that barriers to do with being in care which might make this difficult are overcome
- Promote multi agency working and a solution focused, child centred approach
- Ensure the outcomes for looked after children are tracked, monitored and appropriate interventions are put in place and included in termly PEPs

Teaching and Support Staff

In addition we will require our whole school teaching and support staff to assist in the implementation and support of this policy for looked after children by requiring all to:

- Ensure the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained
- Be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews
- Respond positively to any request by a looked after child to be the person they want to talk with
- Ensure that no child in care becomes a victim of stigmatisation at any time
- Positively promote the self-esteem of looked after children
- Convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement and celebrate their success.

Virtual School

We will work with our Virtual School so they will provide:

- Support and leadership to our school to ensure that our looked after children access high quality learning and support, which meets their needs in a timely way and leads them onto a long term education, training and employment pathway
- Strategic leadership to ensure there are high aspirations for looked after children's education and the right provision, policies and protocols are in place to support them
- Direct, targeted support for looked after children
- Training about education issues for all those who work with our looked after children
- Specialist support to our school, for example: multi agency working, Personal Education Planning, preventing exclusion and promoting inclusion
- Support and advice to our LAC's social workers, foster carers and other agencies.
- Advice to other local authorities who have looked after children educated in our school.
- Data and analysis of outcomes for looked after children in our LA.

DEALING WITH KEY CHALLENGES

Admissions

- We will act in accordance with the law and admissions codes as they apply to schools, giving timely access to looked after children.
- Work with the local authority and other authorities to plan for admissions.
- If appropriate, ensure that 'pre admission professionals [and if appropriate PEP] meetings' are held and that arrangements are in place to support a child starting a new school
- Ensure the PEP is reviewed within 28 days of admission.

Access to appropriate curriculum

- Looked after children will have access to the best curriculum that we can offer. We will work proactively with others to ensure that the curriculum is developed to meet needs.

Access to support for LAC with Special Educational Needs

- We will work proactively to ensure children's needs are assessed early and their needs met.
- The designated teacher will take the lead in ensuring support or assessment from other agencies is in place.
- We expect, direct, clear, timely advice from professionals, including attendance at meetings.

Preventing suspension and improving attendance

- The Virtual School will be informed immediately, of suspensions by email
- Where attendance is falling or low the school will work with other agencies, including the Virtual School, to address the underlying issues and ensure a plan is in the PEP.
- The school will work with other agencies [including foster carer, social worker, psychology services and Virtual School] on prevention strategies. The school will seek, accept and be provided with support in a timely manner according to the availability of resources [including from the Virtual School] if a pattern of suspension is developing and ensure plans to address issues are in the PEP.
- Funding and resources already in the school's budget to prevent suspension [e.g. Pupil Premium Plus] will be used to promote inclusion and prevent exclusion.

Our aim is to never suspend a looked after child:

- Permanent exclusions will only occur when all other options have been exhausted.
- Where a permanent exclusion can be anticipated because of a developing pattern of behaviour, alternatives will be found before this occurs.
- If there is a permanent exclusion or managed transfer, we will not take a child off roll until a new placement is found. We will take a lead in working with others to find a high quality alternative placement.

Communication and Sharing information

- We will share attendance, exclusion, target setting, achievement data and plans with relevant agencies including the Virtual School.
- We will respond to requests marked urgent within 24 hours and within an hour in emergencies.
- In other cases we will adhere to statutory or agreed timescales.

Multi-agency working

- We will work proactively with other agencies to meet the needs of looked after children and will contribute to the development of these services through receiving and contributing to training.

Supporting transitions and transition Post 16

- The designated teacher from the next education placement will be invited to the professionals and PEP meetings in our school. Our designated teacher will attend professionals' and PEP meetings in the new placement as requested and appropriate.

Working with other LAs

- We will expect other LAs to provide support for their looked after children in our school, including planning, funding and support. This will include all the stipulations of this policy and a particular emphasis on:
 - Pre planning for new education placements. Where there are issues, a pre placement admissions meeting should be held with all professionals involved.
 - Continuing financial support
 - Continuing professional support via the PEP process.

OFSTED

Stokes Wood Primary School are aware that the OFSTED inspection framework will consider the provisions that we, as a whole school, have put in place to support looked after children. We understand that a judgement will be made within the OFSTED framework in terms of how far this school is able to support looked after young people. The formal report will include comments about the progress and support provided to these vulnerable young people.

Method for review

Specific issues with the policy should be raised directly with the Head Teacher or the governing body (as appropriate).

Stokes Wood Primary School will review the effective implementation of this policy annually, in regard to successfully meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for looked after children.