



## Clarendon Primary School, Nursery & Children's Centre

# Looked After Children Policy

*'Doing our best to achieve our best'*

### Introduction

At Clarendon Primary School the staff and governors are committed to providing quality education for all children by focusing on ensuring they have access to a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum; by ensuring there is equality of opportunity and access for all; and by ensuring there is an ongoing focus on securing the best possible learning outcomes for every child.

The staff and governors recognise that, when compared with their peers, nationally there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care or children that were previously in residential and foster care. As a result we are committed to implementing the principles and best practice guidelines outlined in current government policy and are committed to ensuring staff are able to effectively carry out their responsibilities as outlined below.

### Definition 'Looked After Children'

Under the 1989 Children's Act, a child is considered 'Looked After' by a local authority or LAC if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Local Authority (LA). These children may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority, but living in ours. Children who are 'Looked after' fall within one of four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)  
*Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act. As a result they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school.*
- Children who are the subject of a care order, (section 31) or interim care order, (section 38)  
*The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989. As a result they may be living with foster carers, in a children's home, in a residential school or with relatives.*
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection, (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the care of the LA or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

### Definition 'Previously Looked After Children'

Previously looked-after children are those who:

- are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.  
*(Defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014)*
- were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.  
*('State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.)*

### Current Legislation

The Children's Act places a duty on school's to safeguard 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children', promote their educational achievements and ensure that they are able to achieve / reach their full potential.

## Policy aims

At Clarendon Primary School we aim to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Support 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' and give them access to the opportunities required in order to achieve their potential, enjoy learning, feel an active member of the school community and, as far as possible, take an active role in all school activities.
- Ensure school policies and procedures are followed for 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children'.
- Work with the 'Virtual School' and ensure that carers and social workers of 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' are kept fully informed of their child's progress, attainment, behaviour, social integration and development as well as their general attitude to learning and wider school life.
- Fulfil our schools' role as 'corporate' parent to promote and support the education of children who are 'Looked After Children', by asking the question, **'Would this be good enough for my child?'**

In school our approach to supporting the educational achievement and ongoing social development of 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Acknowledging a child's previous difficulties and using these to plan future support
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Providing early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting each child's health and well-being
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with parents, (as appropriate) carers, social workers and other professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved

## Supporting potential vulnerabilities

In school we recognise that children who are 'Looked After or Previously Looked After' may, or may not, have some or all of the following difficulties, which require appropriate support and intervention in school:-

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- poor attachments to others
- delayed social / emotional / cognitive development
- prone to mental health issues
- feeling a sense of isolation with few friends
- experiencing behavioural difficulties
- being bullied or show bullying towards others
- having a need to be very private, which makes them an extremely vulnerable in terms of education and future life-chances

To support the achievement of 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children', the school has introduced two key measures outlined in good practice guidelines:

- To ensure a designated Teacher for 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' is nominated in school. At Clarendon, this is the headteacher.  
*This person must be a qualified teacher and ideally a member of the senior leadership team, who has enough experience to advise on and provide staff training on issues relating to children who are 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' as well as be able to influence decisions about their teaching and learning.*
- To ensure Personal Education Plans, (PEPs) are in place, implemented and reviewed on a termly basis for 'Looked After Children' and ensure appropriate ongoing support and intervention takes place for 'Previously Looked After Children'.

*Whilst additional funding support, (Pupil Premium Plus funding) will continue until the child is 16 years old, the completion of a PEP will only continue until a child is no longer in the care of the LA or until an adoption order has been granted/finalised.*

## **Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Act as an advocate 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children'.
  - When new children join the school, welcome them and ensure a smooth induction takes place for them as well as their carer, and note any specific difficulties and requirements they have. This includes their individual care status.
  - Ensure any new child to the school is assessed on entry in order to help identify their strengths and weaknesses as this will help inform subsequent teaching and learning.
  - Acknowledge the child's past and previous difficulties as well as intervention given as this will help plan future support.
  - Ensure that each 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Child', (if they wish) has an identified member of staff 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 each 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Child' and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary.
  - Ensure effective strategies, that support the education of this vulnerable group, are implemented, individualised, (as necessary) and regularly reviewed.
  - Make sure that, where required, children who are 'Looked After or Previously Looked After' are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements.
  - Ensure that parents and carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
  - Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors.
  - Ensure confidentiality of all children and only share personal information on a 'need to know basis'.
  - Support the child and family, as required, with their school attendance.
  - Ensure that each child and their parents/carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
  - Where feasible, encourage 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning.
  - Ensure the speedy transfer of information and records between individuals and other relevant agencies, including a child's new school if and when they transfer.
  - If the child is experiencing difficulties and / or is in danger of being excluded, seek urgent meetings and support with relevant parties.
  - Produce **at least one** annual report to the governing body regarding children who are 'Looked After and Previously Looked After'. Information should include: current rates of progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour, how PEPs have been implemented and whether the actions put in place have been effective in addressing any identified needs, what ongoing support has been implemented to support 'Previously Looked After Children', how the Designated Teacher has worked in partnership with local authorities and information relating to any training undertaken. **(N.B – For confidentiality reasons, this report will not mention the children's names.)**
  - Identify appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus funding for 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' and review the impact of this.
  - Provide written information to assist any planning / review meetings.
- In addition to this, for 'Looked After Children,' the designated teacher will:
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan, (PEP) is completed as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and their carer in liaison with the social worker as well as with other relevant support workers/agencies.
- The PEP should be linked to outcomes of each child's Care Plan meetings as well as any EHCP plan, recommended SEN support arrangements, Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) or Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP). Whilst the child continues to be classified as a 'Looked After Child', these plans should be reviewed termly with targets achieved either extended or changed.
- Where appropriate target areas should include behavioural management strategies used to ensure behaviour is managed in the most effective way, strategies to support the child's mental health and well-being and their educational attainment as well as ongoing social / emotional development.

- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and ensure a summary report is prepared in advance of review meetings.
- Liaise with the Virtual School on all aspects of a 'Looked After Childs' progress and current support arrangements.
- Ensure that any data returns relating to children who are 'Looked After' are completed and returned to the relevant LA in a timely manner.

### **Roles and responsibilities of all staff**

All staff will:

- Ensure that any 'Looked After or Previously Looked After Child' is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Be familiar with this policy and respond appropriately to requests for information / documentation required in order to support the completion of any ongoing support plans, PEPs and review meetings.
- Respond positively to any 'Looked After or Previously Looked After Childs' request to act as the 'named person' who 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 is stigmatised in any way due to the personal circumstances, religious beliefs or cultural practices.
- Provide a supportive climate to enable the child to achieve stability within the school setting and receive the appropriate support and intervention required in order to reach their full potential.
- Work with the Designated Teacher to identify, plan, implement, deliver and review the impact of any required intervention and additional support arrangements required.
- As with all children, have high aspirations and expectations for both their educational and personal achievement and work as part of a wider school team to help remove any potential barriers to learning as well as positively promote the general well-being and self-esteem of the child.

### **Roles and responsibilities of the governing body**

The governing body of this school will:

- Nominate a school governor to support the Designated Teacher and ensure the needs of any 'Looked After or Previously Looked After Child' are understood by staff and taken into account at a school management level.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance relating 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children'.
- Be aware of whether the school has any children who are 'Looked After' by the LA, (no names).
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' and that they have the resources required to carry out their role and responsibilities in relation to supporting this group of children.
- Support the Headteacher/Designated Teacher and other staff to ensure the needs of each 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' are met.
- Ensure the nominated governor links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body. (**N.B** – For child protection and confidentiality reasons these reports should not include any names of individual children)
- Review the effective implementation of this policy on an annual basis.
- Support the LA in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of children who are 'Looked After or Previously Looked After' by an LA.
- In partnership with the headteacher, ensure that, through relevant training and development, the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills and knowledge required to fulfil this role effectively.

### **Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion process**

In partnership with the child, (where appropriate) their carers, social worker, any other supporting professionals involved as well as their biological parents, (where appropriate) ensure each child's PEP is completed and reviewed on a termly basis. This process is undertaken as follows:

- The social worker will inform the school of a child becoming 'Looked After' or of a child, who is already 'Looked After', joining the school.
- The social worker will share any relevant information with the Headteacher / Designated Teacher as well as copies of any relevant reports. This includes the previous PEP, where one exists.
- The date for the completion of an initial PEP meeting will be set.
- A copy of the new PEP form will be sent to the school by the social worker so they can complete the educational data and targets sections as well as add any relevant details about the school and the child's support / teaching arrangements.
- The PEP meeting will take place within 20 days. This meeting will involve the child, (at an appropriate level) social worker, Designated Teacher (as well as other staff if appropriate), the child's carer and any other supporting professionals.
- Ensure, where appropriate, appropriate target areas are identified. These include behavioural management strategies needed to ensure behaviour is managed in the most effective way, strategies and support required to support the child's mental health and well-being and their educational attainment as well as their ongoing social / emotional development.
- At the end of the meeting a date will be set for the next PEP meeting. (**N.B** – Whilst the child is considered 'Looked After', these meetings take place on termly basis.)
- The completed PEP will be sent to the social worker, who will take it to the child's statutory review meeting and discuss it within the wider context of the child's life.
- The social worker will send the PEP to the Virtual School, LAC team, carers and parents.
- The school will continue to implement, monitor and review the identified actions, targets and interventions as well as track the child's overall progress within school.

#### **Effective and high quality PEPs should:**

- Be an accurate and comprehensive record of the child's experiences, progress and achievement – social, emotional and academic.
- Be linked to information recorded in other education plans. These include an EHCP plan; targets set for children recorded at an SEN Support level; strategies and targets identified in a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) or in an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP).
- Identify developmental and educational needs, (short and long term) in relation to a child's required needs in order to develop specific skills, knowledge, concepts and experiences.
- Identify, (where appropriate) any behaviour, mental health and well-being needs as well as social / emotional needs, again in the short and long term, to ensure appropriate support and strategies are implemented.
- Set short term targets with clear progress measures identified against each target / area of need.
- Set long term plans and identify future aspirations, e.g. in relation to public examinations and future career plans.
- Document identified actions for specific individuals being used to support the achievement of agreed targets.
- Identify appropriate use of the pupil premium plus funding to support the child and targets set in the PEP.

#### **Confidentiality**

All staff in school are aware that complete confidentiality of any information relating to children should be maintained at all times.

To ensure the safety and well-being of a 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Child', information will be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information can be shared with which school staff with parent/carers and any other supporting professionals working with the child and family.

For children still classified as a 'Looked After Child' this will be discussed with the child's social worker at the initial settling in meeting or PEP meeting and will only be shared once agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, (where appropriate) and other parties.

#### **Training**

The Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

### **Further information**

Further information from the LA relating to supporting 'Looked After and Previously Looked After Children' can be found on the Surrey Virtual School's Website: <http://www.surreyvirtualschool.org.uk/>

### **Other relevant policies**

This policy links with a number of other school policies. These include:

- The school and nursery admission code
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Home-school agreement
- The Equality Policy
- The accessibility plan and equality scheme
- Safeguarding Child protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- PSHE and Citizenship Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Staff code of conduct

### **Policy Review:**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date reviewed: Spring term 2019

Review date: Spring term 2020