



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 & governors recognise that, when compared with their peers, nationally there is considerable educational underachievement of children 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).

Current Legislation

The Children's Act places a duty on school's to safeguard '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 Children' and give them access to the opportunities required in order to achieve their potential, enjoy learning, feel an activity member of the school community and, as far as possible, take an active role in all school activities.
- Ensure school policies & procedures are followed for 'Looked After Children'.
- Work with the 'Virtual School' and ensure that carers and social workers of LAC 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', 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 Children' is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- 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 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' 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 Children', the school has introduced two key measures outlined in good practice LAC guidance documentation:

- To ensure a designated Teacher for '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' as well as be able to influence decisions about their teaching and learning.
- To ensure Personal Education Plans, (PEPs) are in place and reviewed on a termly basis.
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 for 'Looked After Children'.
- When new children join the school, will welcome them and ensure a smooth induction for them as well as their carer, and note any specific requirements. 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.
- 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', they should be reviewed every 6 months with targets achieved either extended or changed.

- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and ensure a summary report is prepared in advance of review meetings.
- Ensure that each child in public care, (if they wish) has an identified member of staff they can talk to. This should be based on the child's request, & may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher.
- Co-ordinate support for the 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' are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements.
- Ensure that 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.
- Provide written information to assist planning / review meetings.
- Support the child and family, as required, with their school attendance.
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Where feasible, encourage '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.
- Liaise with the Virtual School on all aspects of a 'Looked After Child's' progress and current support arrangements.
- If the child is experiencing difficulties and / or is in danger of being excluded, seek urgent meetings with relevant parties.
- Ensure that any data returns relating to children who are 'Looked After' are completed and returned to the relevant LA in a timely manner.
- Produce **at least one** annual report to the governing body regarding children who are 'Looked After'. Information should include: current rates of progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented and whether the actions put in place have been effective in addressing any identified needs, 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.)**

Roles and responsibilities of all staff

All staff will:

- Ensure that any '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 PEPs and review meetings.
- Respond positively to any 'Looked After Child's' request to act as the 'named person' 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 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 to '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' children and that they have been enabled to carry out their role and responsibilities in relation to supporting children who are classified as 'Looked After'.
- Support the Headteacher/Designated Teacher and other staff to ensure the needs of each 'Looked After Child' 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' 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) 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.
- A date for the completion of an initial PEP 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 social worker, Designated Teacher (as well as other staff if appropriate), the child's carer, any other supporting professionals and the young person themselves, if appropriate.
- 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 a statement of special educational need / EHCP plan; targets set for children recorded at an SEN Support level; strategies and targets identified in a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) or Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP).
- Identify developmental and educational needs, (short and long term) in relation to a child's required need to develop specific skills, knowledge, concepts and experiences.
- 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 whether the child is eligible for the Pupil Premium and if so how this allowance will be used to support the targets set in the PEP.

Confidentiality

To ensure the safety and well-being of a '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 at the PEP meeting and will only share this once agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, (where appropriate) and other parties.

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

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 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 Policy
- Child protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching and Learning 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: Summer term 2016
Review date: Summer term 2017