

Federation of St John's and St Paul's Whitechapel CE Primary Schools

POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Context and Principles

Nationally, looked-after children (LAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We acknowledge that schools have a major part to play in ensuring that LAC are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being, in line with government recommendations.

This policy takes account of all related legislation and guidance, including:

- DfE Statutory Guidance to Governing Bodies: "Supporting Looked After Learners" 2006 and "The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children" 2018.
- The education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2007.
- The Local Authority's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the education of looked after children (LAC).
- "Show Me How I Matter: a guide to the education of looked after children" LGA and IDEA publication 2006.

Our approach to supporting the educational achievement of LAC is based on the following principles:

- Having high expectations for learning and attendance
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Early intervention and targeted support
- Minimising exclusions
- Listening to children
- Promoting a wide learning experience
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

Actions

We are committed to helping all children, including those looked-after and previously looked after, to achieve the highest possible standards. This can best be measured by their sense of wellbeing and progress in their achievements and attendance.

The Governing Body will adhere to the following statutory requirements in respect of looked after children:

- Ensure a staff member for LAC is identified and enabled to carry out their responsibilities as set out below.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed in line with statutory and local authority guidance.
- Identify a nominated governor for LAC.

The federation will champion the needs of LAC, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest possible level.

Responsibility of the Headteacher

- Identify a designated teacher for LAC (SENCo), whose role is set out below. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated staff member not be available to carry out these legal duties.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission, progress, attendance and exclusions (if any) of LAC and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

- Identify a nominated governor for LAC.

- Ensure that all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of looked after children.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs of all its LAC, regardless of their originating authority.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of LAC, through an annual report from the SENCo.
- Ensure, where relevant, that LAC are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies, practices and procedures to ensure LAC achieve and enjoy their time at the school.
- Ensure the school has a designated staff member for LAC and that they are enabled and supported, along with the headteacher and other staff, to carry out their responsibilities as below.
- Receive a report each year setting out:
 - The number of looked-after pupils on roll (if any) and dates of joining and/ or leaving.
 - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their results in SATS, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - The number and duration of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any), as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - The destination of pupils who leave the school.
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Ensure systems are in place to share the above annual report with OFSTED in line with current statutory requirements. In addition to the report, to provide information to the Tower Hamlets Virtual School on a termly basis.

The Role of the Designated Staff Member

Government guidance says that the designated staff member should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen; who should be an advocate for looked after children, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

Specialist training, advice and support for the role of designated teacher will be provided by Tower Hamlets Virtual School. It should also be noted that the remit of OFSTED inspectors now includes a specific focus on LAC, monitoring how the school has promoted their inclusion and attainment, and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that a PEP is completed with the child, their social worker, carer and other relevant people at least 2 weeks before their statutory reviews.
- Ensure that each looked-after child has an identified member of staff they can talk to: this need not be the designated staff member, as it will be based on the child's own situation and wishes.
- Track academic and other progress and target support appropriately.
- Coordinate any support for LAC that is necessary within the school and from outside.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Facilitate and encourage looked after children to join extra-curricular activities and maximise out of school learning opportunities e.g. “gifted and talented” and “aim higher” projects.

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- Ensure as far as possible attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as needs of looked after children.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties (eg carer, social worker, birth family, other professionals) where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and where appropriate between schools.
- Be pro-active in supporting transitions and planning when moving to a new phase in their education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure all required information is collated and sent to Virtual School every term.
- Ensure appropriate use of Pupil Premium funding to support looked after children

The Responsibilities of all Staff

All staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the personal achievement of LAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it necessary.
- Respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of LAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC.
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the school's policy.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Advice, information and support is available from Tower Hamlets Virtual School to governors and staff around general issues as well as issues relating to specific children.

Associated Policies

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that governors have regard to the needs of looked after children when reviewing them:

- Safeguarding policies
- Child Protection Policy
- School Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equalities Policies
- Special Educational Needs Policy

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