

Judith Kerr Primary School

Looked-after and Eligible Children Policy (a CfBT Schools Trust standard policy)

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Author		Target group	All employees, consultants and volunteers
Owner	CfBT Schools Trust		
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Policy: Looked-after and Eligible Children

CfBT Schools Trust and Judith Kerr Primary School believe that schools play a key role in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked-after and eligible children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. We believe that schools can also provide a source of continuity and ‘normality’ for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked-after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

Definition

A child who is looked-after by the Local Authority (referred to as a looked-after child (LAC)) as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989, means a child who is subject to a care order (or an interim care order) or who is accommodated by the Local Authority.

An eligible child is a child who is looked-after, after aged 16 or 17 and has been looked after by a Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after they reached age 14 and ended after they reached 16.

For the purpose of this policy, looked-after children include eligible children.

Legal framework

This policy takes account of The UN CRC Article 25 (review of treatment in care); The Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014; The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 as amended in 2013, and the Adoption and Care planning regulations 2014; The Education and Adoption Bill 2016; the Serious Crime Act 2015 and DfE statutory guidance: Working together to safeguard children 2015, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 and Promoting the education of looked after children 2014; DfE Governors’ Handbook 2017, and the Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Anti-bullying

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education for all looked-after children.
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked-after children.
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and trancies for all looked-after children.
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of looked-after children.
- Ensure the designated teacher is a member of the leadership team and there is written cover provision for when they are absent or unavailable.

- Ensure that the designated teacher has appropriate training for the role and recognises that looked-after children and those placed for adoption are not a homogenous group and that their individual needs will be different.
- Promote the attendance of looked-after children.
- Promote a culture that takes account of the child's views according to age and understanding in identifying and meeting their education needs.
- Promote a culture throughout the school and amongst professional partners of understanding the importance of listening to and taking account of the child's wishes and feelings about education and the Personal Educational Plan (PEP) process.
- Ensure the appropriate and educationally impactful use of the LAC Pupil Premium, providing quantifiable results.
- Prioritise the mental health and emotional wellbeing of LAC pupils.

Objectives

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are looked-after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extracurricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked-after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of new legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavor to support all looked-after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.
- Embed an emphasis on emotional wellbeing throughout the school and curriculum, which looked-after children will particularly benefit from – **this is everyone's responsibility**.
- Give looked-after children a voice and influence in their school lives and ensure that their views are heard and acted on.

Roles and responsibilities

The name of the Designated Teacher for Looked-after Children is: [insert name]

Many looked-after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel 'different'. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However, we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

The named Local Governor will work in cooperation with the Headteacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked-after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Headteacher and Designated Teacher also have

specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked-after children.

The named Local Governor will ensure that:

- The school has a coherent policy for looked-after children.
- The school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DfE guidelines.
- The Designated Teacher has received appropriate training.
- Looked-after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum.
- The Local Governing Body receives an annual report.
- The school works closely with the Virtual School Head.

The Headteacher will:

- Appoint the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training.
- Ensure the Designated Teacher is a member of the leadership team and there is appropriate cover provision.
- Oversee the implementation of the policy on looked-after children.
- Be responsible for all systems to support looked-after children.
- Report to the Local Governing Body/Trust/Virtual School Head on a regular basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints.

The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked-after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after-children in the school.

The Designated Teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked-after children of the school by:

- Maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked-after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- Ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked-after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements.
- Acting as an advocate for looked-after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances.
- Work to close the attainment and progress gap between looked-after children and their peers and create a culture of high aspirations for them.

The Designated Teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked-after children. S/he will:

- Have an overview and co-coordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked-after.
- Maintain records regarding all looked-after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child.
- Establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer.
- Monitor the educational progress of all looked-after children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern.

The Designated Teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- Building positive home-school relationships between parents/ esignated carers with regular opportunities for dialogue.
- Being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's PEP.
- Playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked-after children.
- Helping coordinate education and PEP meetings.
- Serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education.
- Ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties.
- Inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP).

The Designated Teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- By meeting with the looked-after child to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role.
- By ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues (this maybe the class teacher in a primary school).
- By ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan.
- By requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies.
- By meeting with the SENCO to ensure all looked -after children with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning.
- By having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions.
- By ensuring the involvement of careers advice and guidance services with children in Key Stage 4.
- By encouraging all children to continue to further or higher education.
- By ensuring all looked after-children are made to feel a part of the school environment.
- By listening to the child and giving them every opportunity to express their views and acting according to their age and understanding in identifying and meeting their educational needs.

Personal Education Plans

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP or ePEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate. The PEP will consider:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses.
- Interests, both in and out of school.
- Developmental and educational and pastoral needs.
- Future plans, and how these can be supported.
- Issues arising for the child.
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.
- The child's emotional wellbeing and intervention and therapeutic care to develop resilience and emotional wellbeing.

Admission / induction arrangements

Looked-after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow our Admissions Policy.

On admission, the child will meet with the Designated Teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school.

Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

School trips and special activities

Given the delays that some looked-after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked-after children enjoy the same extracurricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Complaints

If a child, young person, parent, designated carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the child, young person, parent, designated carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue that remains unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named local governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Headteacher's response.