



Children in Care Policy

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Definition:

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting. At Brook Primary, the term 'Looked After' as a vulnerable group is inclusive of 'children previously looked after' and 'children who are adopted'.

This policy includes requirements set out in the following related legislation and statutory guidance:

- Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 – duty of local authorities to promote educational achievement of children
- Section 22 (3A) – Children's Act 1989
- Section 20 – Children and Young Persons Act 2008 The Designated Teacher (England) Regulations 2009
- The Children and Families Act 2014 – referred to as the Virtual School

Brook recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body welcomes CLA who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living with Dudley MBC.

Brook encourages and supports the educational achievement of Children Looked After based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all children Looked After.
- All Children Looked After will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.

- Achieving stability and continuity
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Children Looked After.

Rationale:

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, Children Looked After (CLA) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Helping CLA succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Brook recognises that Children Looked After can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that Children Looked After may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. Brook recognises that Children Looked After may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

The educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aim to provide a learning environment in which every Child Looked After can be successful.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibility of the Head teacher:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After, whose role is set out below.
- It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Children Looked After and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children Looked After to all parties involved.
- 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:

- Be fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children Looked After: The Education (Admission of Looked After Children England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors)
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children Looked After.
- Ensure resources meet the needs of Children Looked After.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children Looked After are recognised and met.
- Receive a termly report setting out:
 1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

The role of the Designated Teacher:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Children Looked After in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to the staff as required.
- Ensure that each Child Looked After has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the Children Looked After that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage CLAs may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies as required
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage Children Looked After to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Children Looked After.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school and be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Children Looked After.

The responsibility of the all staff:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children Looked After, as for all pupils.
- Maintain the confidentiality of Children Looked After and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Children Looked After to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Children Looked After.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Children Looked After.

Confidentiality:

Information on Children Looked After will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained

Record Keeping and Information Sharing:

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Children Looked After and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the CLA. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly. The PEP is kept electronically by the virtual school under a password-protected site.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the Child Looked After is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Records and reports on the computer are password protected.

All processes for the storage and sharing of personal data records are in line with the School Privacy Notice and GDPR.

Exclusions:

Brook recognises that Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to exclusions.

Where a CLA is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support them and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources

will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

(see the school behaviour policy)

Staff Development and Training:

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Children Looked After.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Children Looked After, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include working at greater depth or having learning or physical needs or EAL.

Support and Resources:

Brook will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Children Looked After, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Home-School Liaison:

Brook recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Children Looked After to achieve their potential. PEP and care plan review meetings provide the opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Admission Arrangements:

We recognise that due to care arrangements Children Looked After may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

Although the LA has no remit for the education of children who have been adopted, the school recognises that they do have additional rights.

First priority for admission shall be given to relevant looked after children or children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. (Please read Admission Policy)

The school recognises that Children Looked After are an 'accepted group' and will prioritise Children Looked After in the school's over subscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Links with Other Agencies:

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Child Looked After including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement:

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability.

We are committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from prejudice and to achieve their full potential

Other Related Policies:

Other relevant information that should be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- School Information Report
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality Policy and Objectives

Monitoring and Review:

This policy is available for all parents from the school office upon request and is also published on the school website.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After will review the policy every two years unless current legislation is amended.

Date: September 2021

Review date: September 2023