



## Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

# School Policy for Looked After Children

## PURPOSE

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children.

## RATIONALE

Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Looked After Children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers, which can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Looked After Children progressing to Higher Education and following progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- 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 local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be '**Looked After Children**' (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

## INTRODUCTION

Marden Bridge Middle School aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and Welfare of Looked After Children.

- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Mrs H Glendinning.
- The Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mrs Joy Platt.
- The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

## **AIMS**

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for Looked After Children as for all children.
- Ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that Looked After pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensure that Looked After pupils are involved, in decisions affecting their future provision.

## **INCLUSION**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Looked After pupils.

## **MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

A social worker for the Looked After Children initiates a Personal Education Plan – (PEP) - within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care, and ensures that the child or young person is actively involved.

This school assesses each Looked After pupil's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP Review meetings.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

The status of Looked After Children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND CARE WORKERS**

We believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential to aid their future well-being. LAC review meetings and Care Team meetings (held every 6 weeks) are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **THE DESIGNATED TEACHER WILL:**

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children within school
- Be proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise attainment of Looked After Children
- Know all the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about Looked After Children and disseminate information and good practice to other staff
- Influence school policy and practice for Looked After Children

- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Contribute to PEP Review meetings
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Monitor the targets set out in the PEP
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for Looked After Children
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement
- Report to the Governing body on Looked After Children in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events
- Ensure additional transfer days are offered for year 4 and year 8 pupils
- Liaise with designated teachers for first and high schools
- Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.
- Submit LAC assessment data to the virtual head

**ALL SCHOOL STAFF WILL:**

- Positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self-esteem.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress.
- Ensure any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Follow school procedures.