

Policy on Children who are Looked After (LAC)

Mill Hill Primary

2019-20

(see also Child Protection Safeguarding, Inclusion, Equal Opportunities, Bullying)

1. Introduction

1.1 Mill Hill Primary School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

1.2 Designated Teacher for LAC is the Head Teacher. Deputy Designate for LAC is the Deputy Head Teacher.

1.3 Governor with responsibility for LAC is Mr Hamilton.

1.4 The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC.

2. Aims and Objectives

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

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 LAC are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may have had experience of:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements
- lack of involvement in extra curricular activities
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- under achievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

3.2 The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education

- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity within the educational setting
- taking corporate responsibility for the child
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards of attainment
- early and targeted intervention
- promoting a rich variety of early years experiences
- celebrating successes with the child and their carers.

3.3 The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for LAC within school
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the school community
- know who all the LAC are, 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 LAC
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate
- ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- ensure that all LAC have an appropriate Personal Education Plan (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 (pupil voice)
- keep PEP's and other records up to date and review PEP's at transfer and at six monthly intervals as advised
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC 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 LAC
- 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 LAC
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement
- contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- report to the Governing Body on LAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
 - the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
 - attendance of LAC compared to other pupils
 - attainment compared to other pupils
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school

- attend governor meetings as appropriate
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in collaboration with the school's SENDCo and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are 3 times more likely to have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and nine times more likely to have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) than the general school population.

3.4 Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- follow school procedures
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC
- positively promote the raising of a LAC's self esteem
- ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEP's and review meetings
- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC is experiencing difficulties
- give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy and relevant national guidance.
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required

3.5 Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- liaise with the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:

- admission to school

- National Curriculum and examinations

- out of school learning and extra curricular activities

- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC

3.6 The Local Authority will:

- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC
- ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- ensure that LAC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible

- ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or if coming from another authority
- make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage or a Key Stage and at any mid-phase transfer
- identify a designated officer who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC
- be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs

4. Who are Children who are Looked After?

4.1 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).

4.2 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 'Children who are Looked After' (LAC). They may be looked after by our Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

5. Admissions

5.1 The Governing Body endorses council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we will offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

6. Inclusion

6.1 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 LAC.

7. Allocation of resources

7.1 The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

8. Monitoring the progress of LAC

8.1 The social worker for the LAC should initiate a PEP within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

9. Record Keeping

9.1 The Designated Teacher will know who all the LAC are and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

10. Staff Development

10.1 We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC.

11. Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

11.1 At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

12. Links with external agencies/organisations

12.1 We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- LAC team
- Educational psychologists and other external professionals from Local Authority SEN services and beyond
- medical officers and paediatricians
- school nurses
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)/ Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)
- Attendance Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service

13. Monitoring and Review

13.1 We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice regularly.

Signed

Chair of Governors

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Head Teacher

March 2020