



Park View School
Together We Grow Stronger

Park View School

Looked After Children Policy

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Authorised by Chair of Governors:

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Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for LAC and previously-LAC are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Park View School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Definitions

“Looked-after children (LAC)” are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children’s residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

“Previously-LAC” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and previously-LAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and previously-LAC.
- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the Head Teacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher, the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
 - The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for previously-LAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and previously-LAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and previously-LAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Working with the Head Teacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and previously-LAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-LAC.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and previously-LAC and providing them with support and encouragement.

- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and previously-LAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and previously-LAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously-LAC.

Personal education plan (PEP)

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
 - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The Designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or previously-LAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.

Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

Working with agencies

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review.

The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and previously-LAC.

Behaviour management strategies will be agreed, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and previously-LAC will receive the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

Safeguarding

The school recognises that many LAC and previously-LAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and previously-LAC as soon as possible.

Where a LAC or previously-LAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The Head Teacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and previously-LAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or previously-LAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a LAC or previously-LAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

Pupil mental health

LAC and previously-LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and previously-LAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with LAC or previously-LAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used on a termly basis to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC and previously-LAC's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

Exclusions

Past experiences of LAC and previously-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behavioural Policy.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school has considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.

Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behavioural Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Information sharing

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on LAC and previously LAC and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the designated teacher and the Head Teacher.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.