



Policy for Looked After Children

For the purposes of this policy, the term Looked After Children (LAC) also incorporates previously Looked After Children who have subsequently been adopted or subject to special guardianship.

The Headteacher, as Designated Teacher in charge of Looked After Children will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Designated Teacher in charge of Looked After Children will be the Inclusion Manager.

Advice and support is available from Medway Council's Looked After Children Virtual Headteacher.

Policy Statement

Riverside Primary School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Understanding the particular needs of each LAC.
- Prioritising education and progression.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Early intervention and priority action.
- Listening to children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

Implications

The Governing Board of Riverside Primary School is committed to recognising and taking account of the fact that individuals' personal circumstances can affect attitudes and performance, and that this is particularly the case for young people who are or who have been in care. As for all pupils, Riverside is committed to helping every

Looked After Child to achieve the highest standards they can. This will include developing aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

We are committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure Looked After Children are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Ensure a Designated Teacher for LAC is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- Work with the child's designated Social Worker to ensure that a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed, in line with Medway's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Identify a governor who is prepared to be trained as Designated Governor for LAC.

Links to other policies and documents

This policy links with a number of other school policies and documents. It is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them. These policies and documents include:

- Local Authority oversubscription criteria.
- Behaviour & Discipline Policy.
- Home School Agreement.
- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Inclusion (SEND) Policy.

The school will champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Governing Board will:

- Monitor the academic progress of LAC, through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure that LAC are given priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school. This will be achieved by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure LAC achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort. Ensure that the school has a suitably qualified Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support and challenge the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:

1. The number of LAC on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
3. Their end of year attainment, levels, grades and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) for LAC.
5. The destinations of LAC 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.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEADTEACHER

- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Ensure that appropriate and effective actions are taken to close any gaps in the attainment of LAC and that their outcomes are in line with those of their peers.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC. OFSTED now select a number of LAC, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that the adoptive parents or guardians of previously LAC have ready access to an identified member of staff of similar standing as the Designated Teacher for LAC.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

- Consider a nominated Governor Champion for LAC.
- Appoint a suitably qualified Designated Teacher for LAC, 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 the Designated Teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC.
- Allocate resources (including Pupil Premium) to meet the needs of LAC.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen. They should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for LAC. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through our Virtual Headteacher and Social Care Team. Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on Looked After Children, monitoring how the School has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- 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
- Work with the designated social worker to ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that the focus of Personal Education Plan review meetings is on securing appropriate progress and that the review clearly identifies targets and the support necessary to achieve them. (NB: Previously Looked After Children who have been adopted or are subject to Special Guardianship will not have PEP meetings, so the Designated Teacher should ensure that their progress is carefully tracked by other means.)
- Ensure that each LAC 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. Members of staff who take on this role should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage LAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC.
- Recognise that timely intervention is more effective than exclusion and set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that a high proportion of LAC have experienced bullying so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.

- Work in partnership with the Medway Virtual Headteacher and Virtual Headteachers of other authorities.
- Ensure that Personal Education Plans, attendance and attainment data and other requested information are returned to the Virtual Headteacher as requested.
- Be aware of the most recent developments in the education and support of LAC and seek any necessary support and guidance from the local authority's Virtual Headteacher.

NB: Previously Looked After Children who have been adopted or are subject to Special Guardianship will not have PEP meetings. Therefore the Designated Teacher should be aware of the need to provide timely and appropriate support where necessary, involving relevant agencies, for example where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.

THE ROLE OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of LAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC.
- Be aware that a high proportion of LAC have experienced bullying, so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.