



Children Looked After Policy

Policy review Date	October 2021
Date of next Review	October 2022
Reviewed By	SLT & Designated Teacher
Designated Teacher	Miss Catherine McCleallan
Designated Governor	Mrs Paula Southgate
Headteacher	Mrs Georgina Delmonte
Chair of Governors	Mr Chris Speller Mr Brian Smith

This policy has been reviewed; to the best of our knowledge we do not feel it impacts negatively on any specific group or individual within our school community.

Policy for the Education and Welfare of Children Looked After

“We want looked after children to feel loved and cared for, able to achieve their full potential, and given the best chances in life” Children and Young Person’s Plan 2008 – 2011

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At Hilldene Primary School we believe that all Children Looked After should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve high standards. We aim as a community to be champions for Children Looked After and will take a proactive approach to support their academic success and social and emotional development.

Who are our *Children Looked After*?

The child or young person will either have been taken into care by the Local Authority, or have been ‘Accommodated’ by the Local Authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most Children Looked After will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

In supporting Children Looked After we will:

1. Create a whole school ethos in which *all staff* understand their role and accept their responsibility as a Corporate Parent;
2. Provide a *safe and secure environment*, which values learning and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
3. Strive to ensure that the educational attainment of Children Looked After is at least equitable to their peers;
4. Make sure that the child or young person has access to education appropriate to their age and ability which includes a broad and balanced curriculum;
5. Identify our schools’ role to promote and support the education and learning of our Children Looked After, always asking ‘Would this be good enough for my child?’;
6. Have a *Designated Teacher* (DT) for Children Looked After *who will act as their advocate* and coordinate support for them, liaise with carers, parents (as appropriate), social workers, The Virtual School and school staff on a wide variety of educational, emotional and care issues;

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children Looked After by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities. We are also committed to establishing and maintaining appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the school and with other agencies.

In pursuit of this Policy we have:

1. Nominated a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After who will act as their advocate, and actively engage in coordinating support within the school staff and beyond to promote the best opportunities for these children;
2. Nominated a school governor to ensure that the needs of Children Looked After within the school community are taken into account at a leadership level and to support the Designated Teacher in fulfilling their duties;
3. Provided support for the Designated Teacher to carry out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training provided by the Local Authority and other agencies for Children Looked After.

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (see Statutory Regulations from Sept 2009)

The name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is:

Miss Catherine McCleallan

The Designated Teacher will:

1. Be a qualified teacher (usually experienced) or the headteacher;
2. Be a person who has been working in the school or setting for at least six months
3. Maintain a register of all Children Looked After including those within the Local Authority and those placed outside Havering;
4. Maintain up-to-date records of individual CLA including:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated;
 - Type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential, adoptive;
 - Name of social worker and contact details;
 - Ensure statutory documentation is kept up-to-date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability through the Personal Education Plan (PEP);
 - Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns e.g. name of child, name of parent or carer or key worker in the children's home;
 - Share Child Protection / Disability information (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information);
 - Relevant health information;
 - Baseline information and all test results;
 - Named Officers in the local authority with regard to exclusion, attendance and transition issues such as the Virtual School headteacher;
 - The child's entitlement to decide who attends their CLA Statutory Reviews (6 monthly). If the school does not attend it must submit a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their Personal Education Plan;
 - Participate in appropriate DT training and joint agency training where available;
 - If there are safeguarding concerns for a CLA, contact should be made with the allocated Social Worker and the Virtual School made aware of any concerns.

GOVERNORS

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The name of the Designated Governor for Children Looked After is
Mrs Paula Southgate

The Designated Governor for CLA needs to know the:

1. Current number of CLA on school roll;
2. Number of CLA with up-to-date PEPs;
3. Overall attainment of CLA in the school and their performance compared to peers;
4. Number of CLA with SEN and Statements;
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of CLA;
6. Number of CLA who have been excluded in previous six months with reasons for exclusions;
7. Support provided by the LA to raise the educational achievement of CLA.

The Governing Body will:

1. Ensure the Designated Teacher has opportunity to attend training and that school staff and governors are aware of the DCSF Statutory Guidance;
2. Have knowledge of the Duty on Local Authorities to promote the Educational Achievement of Children Looked After, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004;
3. Make certain that there is a dedicated governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its Children Looked After as part of a larger group of vulnerable children;
4. Take a proactive approach in coordinating with, and supporting, the relevant local authority with regard to the education of Children Looked After attending the school;
5. Ensure that the Designated teacher and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the headteacher.

Whole School Approach:

1. The voice of the Child Looked After will be listened to and acted upon. Access to counselling will be provided if required;
2. We will celebrate the achievements of Children Looked After;
3. Our staff will have high expectations of the child, encouraging achievement and ambition;
4. Our Children Looked After will have a special, trusted adult in school, one of our learning mentors, who will take the time to listen to them and ensure that additional support and counselling is provided in school if required;
5. For our young Children Looked After there will be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect them from school;
6. Training will be provided so that all our staff understand the needs of Children Looked After in order that they actively promote the child's best interest. That they are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the child's ability to engage in the learning process including:
 - Feelings of loss
 - Rejection
 - Anger
 - Isolation
 - Confusion and

- Low self-esteem
7. Adults in our school will behave in a discreet and sensitive manner when giving messages to the child or members of staff in relation to meetings etc reflecting the child's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their case status.
 8. We will ensure that effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established;
 9. There will be appropriate information sharing about individual Children Looked After keeping staff up to date and informed;
 10. Our Designated Teacher will ensure that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within our school and between school, carers, parents (as appropriate), social workers and outside agencies. They will also ensure that high educational expectations are maintained;
 11. We will actively support and encourage the engagement of Children Looked After in out of school hours learning;
 12. Our school will work in partnership with carers, agencies and parents (where appropriate);
 13. We will support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance;
 14. Our staff will help Children Looked After to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis;
 15. Our staff will be aware that being or becoming "Looked After" has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given;
 16. We will make certain that our staff are aware of possible unresolved feelings the child may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.

Special Educational Needs (see SEND policy):

1. Any special educational needs will be quickly identified and appropriate provision will be made;
2. We will have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Children Looked After are underachieving and have early intervention to improve this. Contact must be made with the Virtual School as soon as concerns are raised;
3. If a child has an Education Healthcare Plan, we will ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews (dates can be obtained from the social worker).

Admissions and Transitions:

We will:

1. Prioritise Children Looked After within our own admissions procedures and admit children/students as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children Looked After;
2. Ensure a warm welcome to our school by providing appropriate induction for all Children Looked After so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate;
3. Make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained from the outset;
4. Forward appropriate documentation, in a timely manner, to any receiving school at the point of transition where the receiving school is made known;

5. Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling, learning and educational experience.

Attendance (see School Attendance Policy):

We will:

1. Ensure that attendance data is readily available for monitoring;
2. Establish a first day of absence procedure where attendance is identified as a problem;
3. When a child is absent for three consecutive days or more, the social worker needs to be informed via email or phone call;
4. Inform the carer, Pupil Services, social worker, parents (if appropriate) and Virtual School if there are any concerns about attendance and/or punctuality;
5. Discuss attendance levels in any educational meetings, celebrate success and set realistic targets if it is a concern including regular and punctual attendance of lessons during the school day.

Exclusion: (see Discipline and Behaviour Policy):

We will:

1. Identify any Child Looked After who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Social Worker, Virtual School Headteacher and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the child missing days from school;
2. Ensure in the case of a fixed period (or permanent) exclusion that the carer (or person holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have:
 - been spoken to;
 - within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and reason/s for the exclusion;
 - date of return;
 - outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body, where appropriate and
 - detail arrangements made to enable the excluded child/young person to continue his/her education.
3. Make sure in the event of any exclusion to contact the CLA Team and the virtual School Headteacher with details of exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that appropriate responses can be made.
4. Our school will follow DCSF Guidance 'Improving Behaviour and Attendance; Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units' – September 2008.

Multi-agency Liaison:

1. We will support the child/young person to engage fully in planning and decision making;
2. The Designated Teacher will liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues including homework and equipment required and any trips to be attended. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared;
3. There will be a well planned and coordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs where, for example, potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented;
4. There will be a clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child/young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved;

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5. Our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals and especially with the child;
6. We will be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the parents;
7. Our HT will ensure that requests from the Local Authority for statistical or other information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations;
8. We will encourage each of our Children Looked After to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning.

Personal Education Plans (PEPS):

We will:

1. Hold a PEP meeting each term, inviting the foster carer, the child and parent if appropriate. Additional attendees may include, for example, Educational Psychologist, EWO, Virtual School Headteacher, etc. We will seek the views of the child/young person as to appropriate attendees in line with the statutory guidance.
2. Have a PEP for each CLA which includes appropriate targets. Other school documents e.g. I.E.P, Statement/EHCP, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme will feed into and form part of the PEP;
3. Contribute to the process whereby all Children Looked After have a high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place within 20 days of starting school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child;
4. Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Children Looked After have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set;
5. Make or support applications for Pupil Premium Allowance e.g. those who are at risk of underachieving academically or for extra curricular activities; through discussions at PEP meetings;
6. Ensure that a date is agreed and set for the next PEP meeting and the ePEP is signed off and sent to the Havering Virtual School within seven days of the meeting.

Policy links with other school policies:

Admissions Policy	Race Equality Policy	Single Equality Scheme
Home/School Agreement	Inclusion Policy	Child Protection Policy
Discipline & Behaviour Policy	Anti-Bullying Policy	SEND Policy

References and Documents:

- DfES, Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors (2006).
- Ofsted, raising Achievement of Children in Public Care (2005).
- DfES, Care Matter: Time for Change (2007).
- DCSF, The Children's Plan: building brighter futures (2007).
- Looked After Children – Good practice in Schools (2008).
- DCSF, The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for school Governing Bodies (2009).

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- Ofsted, The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2008/09: Improving outcomes for Looked After Children (2009).
- DCSF, Improving Attainment of Looked After Children in Primary Schools: Guidance for Schools (2009).
- DCSF, Improving Attainment of Looked After Children in Secondary Schools: Guidance for Schools (2009).

The Headteacher and/or the Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff are briefed about the content of this policy and that all regulations and practice outlined are implemented.