



# Looked After Children Policy

## Overview

The objective of this policy is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of children looked after on the roll of the school. This policy incorporates requirements set out in the 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 the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Governors (2009).

## Overview

### The Name of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After for the school:

Maria Shurety (Assistant Headteacher)

### The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After in the school:

Deborah Isaacs (Chair of Governors)

## Who are Looked After Children?

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 may fall into one of four main groups. Children may be accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20). They may be the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38). Children can be the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46). They may also be 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.

All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

At Richard Cobden Primary School we are committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of Looked After Children in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
  - Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
  - Achieving stability and continuity.
  - Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
  - Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
  - Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
  - Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.
  - Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.

## The Role of School Governors is to:

Ensure that the school provides a good framework of support for LAC attending the school.

- Follow the relevant statutory guidance.
- Appoint a suitably qualified teacher with the necessary experience and status as the designated teacher for LAC
- Ensure the designated teacher receives the full support needed to carry out their role effectively, including training and development opportunities so that they are able to increase their knowledge and understanding
- Ensure adequate time and resources are made available for the designated teacher to carry out their duties
- Ensure the designated teacher has opportunities to disseminate knowledge and information to other staff members so that the school environment is one that supports and continually monitors the effectiveness of school policies and the role of the designated teacher on outcomes for LAC pupils via an annual report provided by the designated teacher
- Act on any concerns raised by the designated teacher or arising from any other source with regard to promoting the education of LAC.

## The Role of the Designated Teacher is to:

- Promote a culture within the school whereby staff have a good understanding of the specific educational needs of LAC and the barriers they face.
- Ensure that LAC are not disadvantaged under school policies by contributing to the development and review of school policies that actively support the education of LAC.
- Ensure LAC have a dedicated mentor within the school who can offer them support.
- Foster a culture of high expectations for LAC in staff and help raise the aspirations of looked after children.
- Be responsible for the oversight of the development and monitoring of PEPs within the

school and setting targets for LAC.

Liaise with social workers and the LAC Academy regarding individual children regarding their PEP and any associated issues with their learning.

Develop a good understanding of care planning and how the PEP fits into the wider picture of the child's care.

Promote best practice in helping LAC learn and achieve and helping staff to assess children's preferred learning styles and consider appropriate teaching strategies.

Disseminate information to staff on how to provide effective support to individual looked after children in order to maximise their opportunities.

Identify additional learning opportunities and resources for LAC.

Help LAC become involved in the PEP planning process and ensure their views are taken into account.

Liaise with and report annually to the board of governors on outcomes for LAC.

Liaise with carers to support home learning.

**Oversee** transitions of LAC to and from the school and transfer of information to the advocate for LAC and pursue all resources and educational opportunities on their behalf.

## **The Role of all staff is to:**

Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.

Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.

Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.

Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.

Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.

Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.

Work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

## **The Role of the Foster Carers is to:**

Support the child's education and encourage them to achieve.

Liaise with the child's social worker to agree tasks and areas of responsibility relating to the child's education.

Contribute to the development and review of the child's PEP.

Be the main point of contact for the school on a day to day basis and sign the homeschool agreement.

Support the child to attend school regularly and engage in school activities and ensure adequate support at home for the child to carry out homework.

Carry out any allocated tasks relating to the child's education and fulfilment of the corporate parenting role as set out in the child's placement plan.

Attend parent's evenings and school performances that the child is involved in.

Receive training and support that enables them to engage effectively with the education system and advocate for the child.

Take an active interest in the child's education.

Provide a home environment that actively encourages learning.

Ensure the child has access to books and materials to support their education.

Ensure homework and revision is completed.

- Promote regular school attendance and good behaviour.
- Liaise with the school to deal with any arising issues.

## **The Role of the Parents:**

In cases where children are in care to Camden, and parents still retain some rights and responsibilities regarding their child's care, they may still be entitled to be consulted on their education where this is in the child's interest. There is the possibility that the child will return to their care so they will need to be able to continue supporting their education. In this case, as far as is practicable, appropriate and consistent with the child's welfare, the school, social workers and foster carers will include parents in the PEP process and/or keep them informed of the child's progress. How parents can contribute to their child's education whilst they are looked after will be explored and agreed when the child first becomes looked after and reviewed on an ongoing basis on the advice of the key professionals involved.

## **Admissions And Access To School Places**

Every effort will be made by Camden Council to enable a child to remain at their current school on becoming looked after or following a placement change. Where a child needs a school place, social workers and foster carers will link with the LAC Academy to ensure that a school place that meets the child's educational needs is identified. This includes liaising with other local authorities where a child is placed out of borough and making applications to the local authority or directly to schools as required. Applications for Camden schools should be made via the Schools Admissions team for Reception class and directly to the school for all other years. All admissions to schools are governed by the Schools Admissions code of practice (link below). During the normal round of schools admissions for September starts, LAC will be given the highest priority for school places where a school is oversubscribed.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmissions/a00195/current-codes-and-regulations>

Where a school place is being sought outside of the normal admissions round (ie; during the school year) LAC will be offered a place by the school whenever requested. If a place is being sought and admission would mean the class would go over the statutory limit, the child may still be given a place as an excepted child.

Advice will be sought from the LAC Academy on what action to take if a place is refused. Camden may be able to direct a school or other local authority to offer the child a place under the Schools Admissions code and this process will be co-ordinated by the LAC Academy. When looking for a school place, social workers and foster carers will research schools in the area and decide which is most likely to meet the child's needs and make appropriate applications. Schools must have a good or outstanding Ofsted rating to be considered. Applications for Camden schools should be sent to Camden's school admissions team and to the relevant local authority where the child is placed outside Camden.

## **Exclusions**

LAC are more likely to exhibit behaviours that may lead to exclusion but are more adversely affected by exclusion than their peers. The exclusion of LAC will be a last resort measure only and this school, through the designated LAC teacher, will work with

social workers, foster carers and the LAC Academy to put measures in place to try to prevent this from happening. We will aim to manage and improve behaviour and reduce the risk of exclusion and act decisively to help the child remain at school when there is a threat of exclusion. We will make representations where a child has been excluded and ensure adequate education for the child following exclusion. To do this, social workers, foster carers, designated teachers and the LAC Academy will follow the statutory guidance on exclusions.

Where there is a fixed period exclusion, the designated teacher will link with the social worker and foster carer to arrange alternative education provision and discuss a suitable reintegration plan for when the child returns. Where there is a permanent exclusion, social workers and foster carers may consider using the appeals process to try to overturn the decision. The school will be responsible for providing work for the child for the first 5 days but then the local authority will be responsible for providing a new school place.

Key documents that set out the legal framework are:

- The 'Care Planning, Placements and Case Review Regulations 2010' and related statutory guidance

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/care%20planning%20placements%20and%20case%20review%20regulations%20england%202010.pdf>

- 'Promoting the educational achievement of looked after children statutory guidance 2010'

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00342-2010BKT-EN.pdf>

- 'The roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children; statutory guidance for governing bodies 2009'

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/01046-2009BK TEN.PDF>

Effective From	November 2018
Review Date	July 2021