

Robert Peel Primary School

Looked After Children Policy



Date policy last reviewed: September 2022

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of Governors Date: _____

Aim

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

Rationale

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. We will take this into account when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatization. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves. Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

School Vision

At Robert Peel Primary School our vision is to develop confident, resilient and independent learners who are able to communicate effectively with others. Our aim is for the children to be happy in all aspects of school life and for them to aspire to be the best they can be.

We will achieve this through the teaching of a rich and diverse curriculum, with an emphasis on deep and sustained learning. The learning will focus on building up the children’s knowledge and skills over time and engaging them in real-life experiences. Children will have the opportunity to lead their own learning, question their understanding, develop their vocabulary and gain fluency through practise and rehearsing key skills. Our intent is that children gain a passion for learning and take the skills, knowledge and learning behaviours they have gained at Robert Peel into their next phase of education and adult life.

Definition

The term “looked after” was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child’s welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full time basis.

Furthermore, the term “looked after”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, which has been adopted by the DfES in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”.

Objectives

Looked After Children in this school will:

- receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support
- have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

Teachers and other staff in this school will:

- receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and psychological well-being of Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them
- plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children

The Looked After Designated Teacher and Senior Leaders will:

- identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place
- ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
- ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies

1. Induction

To ensure a supportive and sympathetic induction for Looked After Children admitted to our school, the following arrangements are in place:

- In the first instance children and their carers will be invited into school to meet with the Designated Teacher, have a tour of the school and to meet their new Class Teacher. Ideally, this would happen before the child is admitted into school but this may not always be possible.
- The Designated Teacher will meet with all carers and professionals involved with the child before entry to the school.
- If the child has already been in an educational establishment then the Designated Teacher will liaise with the Designated Teacher of this establishment.
- An individual plan for transition into the school will be developed by the Designated Teacher, professionals and carers to ensure a smooth transition.

- All teachers will be made aware of the child's needs and key adults in their life such as carers, support workers and other professionals.

2. Pastoral Support.

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support, the following arrangements are in place – Liesl Ganney, the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will:

- ensure that staff are aware of any looked after children in school, know who the carer is, and whether parents have parental rights so they know who should receive copies of newsletters reports etc.
- ensure photographs of key people who have authorisation to collect the child from school are displayed in the main office to safeguard the child.
- liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings
- work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after children receive their entitlement.
- ensure that records and plans are kept and maintained appropriately
- provide information to the Governing Body and LA about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils on the school roll
- secure training for the Designated Teacher or others as appropriate to ensure that the school can meet the needs of looked after pupils

3. Information

- The Designated Teacher will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the Designated Teacher will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.
- Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Designated Teacher of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information, to be determined by the Designated Teacher.

- Each child will have their own folder containing all essential information and this will be kept securely
- If not already in place a Personal Education Plan will be completed at the earliest opportunity
- The Designated Teacher will ensure that any arrangements recorded are adhered to by all staff involved.
- The Designated Teacher will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is in order to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the young person.

Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:

- Termly Pupil Progress Meetings
- Termly Tracking of progress and inclusion of interventions if necessary
- Consultation Evenings with the class teacher will be held in the Autumn and Spring Term to discuss progress
- A written report will be completed in the Summer Term by the Class Teacher
- Their progress will also be collated and closely monitored with children who are identified as 'pupil premium' or 'pupil premium plus'
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors termly
- Termly meeting will be held with carers and all professional involved with the child in order to review progress / impact / next steps of individual Personal Education Plan
- All staff will adhere to the Assessment Policy
- This information will be analysed by the Senior Leadership Team to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.
- All children in school including Looked After Children are tracked on a termly basis. Progress is tracked and interventions are arranged if required.
- All children including Looked After Children have progress targets set at the beginning of the year.
- Looked After Children will be tracked and their progress will be analysed against other children in school to ensure they are making progress in line with their peers.

Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

- Attendance data is collated on a weekly basis for all children in school including Looked After Children.

- Any absence is followed up and if absence falls below 97% carers and professionals will be invited into school to meet with the Designated Teacher.
- All staff will adhere to the Attendance policy
- This information will be analysed by Senior Leaders to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.

Information about the behaviour of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:

- All staff will adhere to the Promoting Positive Behaviour policy, and procedures stated within that policy will be followed.
- Challenging behaviours will be logged by the Class Teacher or TLP and the Designated Teacher alerted. This information will be analysed by The Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion so early intervention can take place.

4. Strategies: Curriculum

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The SENDCO/SEND Manager and the Designated Teacher will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff.
- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties
- Talk to the child
- All staff in school will adhere to the Special Needs Policy

We recognise that there are factors which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as highly as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that under-achievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results. If progress is not as could be expected:

- Interventions will be completed including mentoring, emotional and academic interventions,
- When required professional agencies involvement will be sought by the Designated Teacher.

We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark **Mother's /Father's Day** or to investigate **family history** may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities.

Strategies: Attendance

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Designated Teacher to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- The Virtual School will be alerted
- Attendance and lateness is tracked on a weekly basis and acted upon if required.
- Welfare Call are alerted if a Looked After Child is absent.

Strategies: Behaviour

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage.

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Designated Teacher as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.
- The staff will follow the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. The strategies including within these documents take into account all children's needs.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, CAMHs, CHUMs and The Virtual School will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the challenging behaviour. The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with the Designated Teacher.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements.

Strategies: Homework

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete homework, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so. The

following strategies are in place to help Looked After Children complete homework tasks as set for their peers.

- Refer to Homework Policy
- A Learning Mentor will be assigned to the child in question. The child will be encouraged to make use of weekly Homework Club.

Strategies: Extra-Curricular Activities

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school-based activities because of poor relationships with their peers, for example. As we believe it is essential that Looked After Children are able to play a full part in school life, the following strategies are in place to help them to do this:

- The Designated Teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extracurricular activities
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular clubs through their PEP meeting.

The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiative will be monitored and evaluated by:

- Collection and analysis of information
- Discussion with school staff, carers, Social Workers and staff from LA Support Services, both informally and during meetings e.g. those set up to write Personal Education Plans
- Discussions with Looked After Children
- Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of school strategies lies with the Senior Leadership Team.

5. Liaison with Outside Agencies

To ensure that all those involved in the education and care of Looked After Children work together in their best interests, the Designated Teacher will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for:

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives
- Liaising with Social Workers to ensure all Looked After Children have a Personal Education Plan
- Participation in and co-ordination of Review and Planning meetings for Looked After Children. Statutory school procedures such as Annual Reviews for children with EHCP's

will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible and appropriate. In addition, school management will do everything possible to enable class teachers or other appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

6. Roles and Responsibilities - Designated Teacher

The role of the Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Designated Teacher will:

- Attend training sessions organised by the LA
- Cascade this training to school staff
- Arrange and/or deliver training to all staff , including those newly appointed, on issues affecting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and the ways in which educational disadvantage can be overcome
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register
- Work closely with Social Workers and other LA staff to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans which will inform Care Plans
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to care planning meetings
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans

The Head Teacher and Senior Management

The responsibility for the educational and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Headteacher, although some of the day-to-day tasks may be delegated to other staff. Working with the Senior Leadership Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Designated Teacher, are enabled to carry them out.

The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of Looked After pupils in the school
- A comparison of test scores for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils

- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Pupil destinations

The named Governor must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory assessments
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support