

Looked After Children Policy 2022 / 2023

'Working together to achieve success'

Rationale

At Mossgate School we believe that all Children Looked After (CLA), and those previously looked after, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision. As a community we aim to be champions for Children Looked After and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development.

To do this we commit to:

- Supporting them to raise their aspirations;
- Giving them, a sense of the control they have, over their own lives;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

This policy is based on the Lancashire Virtual School Model Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Pupil Premium Plan

Definition

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Children Looked After are those in public care and are either –

- Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order, living either at home or away from home. The Local Authority has parental authority which it then shares with the parents in a prescribed way.
- Accommodated with friends or relatives, foster care or residential homes – parents retain full parental responsibility.
- Remanded into care.

A private agreement is not public care - when a child lives with friends or relatives by private arrangement and these children are not designated as Looked After.

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and

A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Aims

Mossgate is committed to the concept of the corporate parent for children looked after and will work tirelessly to support children looked after, and previously looked after children to:



Our mission:

'Working together to achieve success'

- As active and healthy **individuals** who are inquisitive, have the belief to try new things and manage risks safely.
- As resilient, confident and independent **learners** who strive to achieve their best.
- As **honest, courteous** and **kind friends** who **respect** and value difference and have the **courage** to challenge discrimination.
- As active and **responsible** and **respectful citizens** who have a positive impact within their school, community and wider world.

- Offer stability, safety, continuity, positive experiences and individual care and attention.
- Develop an attachment aware school and embed strategies to support the impact of trauma on emotional and mental health.
- Enable all children to make good progress in learning.

The school will take account of all related statutory guidance:

Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children: DFE Feb 2018

Revised Guidance on the Role of the Designated Teacher for looked after children and previously looked after children Feb 2018.

ROLES AND PRIORITIES

Governing Body will:

- Appoint a Designated Teacher for CLA and children previously looked after
- Ensure the designated teacher has appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure the designated teacher is able to undertake appropriate training to support their role.
- Ensure looked after children and previously looked after children are the priority group for admission to the school.
- Ensure Pupil Premium Grant+ allocated is used for the benefit of looked after Children and previously looked after children to support progress, attainment, engagement and well-being.
- Ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Headteacher and Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will ensure the provision / outcomes for CLA are specifically recorded in:

- School Improvement Plan
- PEP
- SEF
- Appropriate School Policies and Procedures
- Specific Reports on issues such as pupil progress in relation to targets, assessment results; attendance; behaviour, sanctions, exclusions; pupil voice.

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will track the progress of children previously looked after through regular pupil progress meetings and assessment tracking.

The Headteacher and Leadership team will also:

- Provide an annual report on the provision for, and progress of, Children Looked After and previously looked after children, to the Governing Body.
- Ensure staff are aware that the provision to support Children Looked After and previously looked after children is a key school priority.
- Give the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and previously looked after children, currently Mrs Helen Taylor, the time and facilities to carry out his / her job description and to support them at all times in their work.
- Ensure the voice of looked-after and previously looked-after children is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs.
- Ensure Pupil Premium Grant+ allocated is used for the benefit of looked after Children and previously looked after children to support progress, attainment, engagement and well-being.
- Show a personal interest and involvement in Children Looked after and previously looked after children, in the school.
- Challenge negative stereotypes of Children Looked After and previously looked after children, if they exist and to insist on the highest of expectations and especially in terms these cohorts,
- Provide Continuing Professional Development for staff on issues pertaining to Children Looked After and previously looked after children, such as Attachment and Trauma.
- Work in partnership with the Virtual School, Children Social Care and other relevant services to share information and promote progress and achievement.

Designated Teacher

The school Designated Teacher will:

- Be a champion for Children Looked After and previously looked after children within the school and ensure that they are receiving special provision.
- Ensure that the Children Looked After and previously looked after children are aware of who the Designated Teacher is, and that the member of staff's role is to support them at school.
- Ensure that teachers who need to know are aware of who Children Looked After and previously looked after children are, and ensure that the staff treat the information confidentially.
- Ensure that any issues regarding a child or young person being in care or previously in care, are treated sensitively by all staff.
- Ensure Children Looked After and children previously looked after receive extra support as necessary and appropriate, with the key aims of helping them achieve their academic potential and further their personal and social development.
- Ensure Pupil Premium Grant+ allocated is used for the benefit of looked after Children and previously looked after children to support progress, attainment, engagement and well-being.
- Ensure Personal Education Plans (PEP) and PEP Reviews occur on time (one review each term) and to play the lead educational role at these PEP meetings. Ensure the pupil, parent and/or carer and Social Worker contribute to, and are involved in, PEP reviews.
- Ensure that all possible is being done to raise the achievement levels of Children Looked After i.e.
 - The pupils are following an appropriate curriculum
 - The pupils know their targets (see PEP) and get feedback at least termly on how they are improving in relation to these targets and how they can improve and do better;
 - The pupils are entered for national assessment tests and public examinations when appropriate.
 - The pupils have access to any intervention support that is available in the school;
 - The pupils have all possible individual assistance in developing their basic English and Mathematics skills;
 - Pupils on the Special Educational Needs register receive all possible support to meet their needs;
 - All possible support is given at times of transition (KS1 – KS2, KS2 – KS3); or when a home placement move is taking place.
- Ensure that Children Looked After receive a smooth induction into the school, with the obtaining of all relevant past history.
- Keep comprehensive and up to date files on each pupil and to ensure that these are passed on should the student move school.
- Meet with the children regularly to discuss progress and any in school or out of school issues.
- Check with staff on a continuous basis how the pupil are doing and to intervene quickly at the first sign of a problem, e.g. behaviour issues, poor effort etc.
- Monitor attendance on a weekly basis
- Draw up strategies for pupils who are not achieving, behaving poorly or not attending and then monitor the success of their implementation.
- To undertake periodic student voice exercises.
- To encourage pupils to be fully involved in extracurricular and extension activities both in and outside school; to help them with the logistics of taking part in school trips and other activities; to encourage them to be fully involved in the school, eg year and Mossgate Parliament.
- To ensure that students know there is someone they can approach if ever they have a problem or just want to talk, (this could be either the Designated Teacher or another member of staff)
- To make provision for specific mentoring or counselling as needed.
- To liaise with carers keeping them informed but also urging them to be partners in the pupils' education and showing them how they can do this.
- To ensure that pupils are getting their fair share of praise and rewards from the school's systems and to intervene when this seems not to be the case. To be vigilant for any child protection issues and also to check carefully for any sign of a Child Looked After or previously looked after child who is being bullied.
- To ensure that the School Nurse is aware of the child's medical history and is liaising with the Children Looked After Health Support Team.
- To liaise closely with the Education of Children Looked After Virtual School Team
 - Informing the Virtual School Team of any problems out of school that seem to have been identified;

- seeking the support of the Virtual School Team if LA or other agency procedures do not seem to be giving necessary support to Children Looked After;
- keeping the Virtual School Team informed about the general progress of Children Looked After;
- Informing the Virtual School Team if carers do not seem to be co-operating with the school in helping the student's educational development.

Teachers and Support Staff:

All staff will:

- Ensure that all Looked After Children are treated inclusively;
- Have high expectations of Looked After Children's involvement in learning and educational progress and ensure that more able children are identified and appropriate provision is in place to enable them to reach or exceed their potential;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- Be aware of the reasons which may affect the behaviour of Looked After Children and understand that this is often a form of communication which may need a more personalised response or intervention;
- Understand how important it is to see Looked After Children as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a Child's in Care's status;
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, Carers, Social Workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him/herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

The role of all those involved in supporting Looked After Children with Special Educational Needs (see our SEN Policy for more information) is to:

- Quickly identify any Special Educational Needs and ensure appropriate provision will be made;
- Have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this;
- Ensure that if the child has a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly Care Planning Reviews; dates can be obtained from the Social Worker.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Pupil Premium Grant for Looked After Children

We will:

- Hold a PEP meeting each term for every Child in Care that involves the Social Worker, Foster Carers, child and parent (if appropriate).
- Ensure that the views of the child are central to the PEP meeting and encourage them to attend;
- Ensure that PEP is of a high quality for each child and includes appropriate targets;
- Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in the PEP will be shared with all appropriate staff, in order that all our Looked After Children have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set;
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is carefully targeted to improve the educational outcomes of the Looked After Children and used as identified in the Personal Education Plan;
- Support applications for a Personal Education Plan Support Allowance (PEPSA) eg. those who are at risk of under-achieving academically or for extra-curricular activities through discussions at PEP meetings;

*Complete the PEP documentation (Lancashire PEP proforma) and using the Professional Portal

Admissions and Transitions (see Admissions Procedures)

We will:

- Prioritise the admission of Children Looked After, within our own Admissions procedures in order to admit students without delay, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children Looked After;
- Ensure that all Children Looked After meet the Designated Teacher who will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral;
- 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;

- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information records are obtained and received;
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition (where the receiving school is made known);
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

Attendance (also see our Attendance Policy)

We will:

- Implement a first day of absence procedure for all whose attendance of Children Looked After falls below 95%;
- Inform the Carer / Education Welfare service / Social Worker / Parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance;
- Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.

Exclusion (also see our Behaviour Policy)

We will actively follow the LA alternatives to Exclusions Toolkit/DFE advice and guidance Multi-Agency Liaison. We will:

- Support the child to engage fully in planning and decision making;
- The Designated Teacher will liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the child’s Social Worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared;
- There will be a clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved;
- Our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child;
- Be aware of, and sensitive to, the appropriate role of the parents.
- Our Designated Teacher will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical or other information held by the school are completed and returned on time, to comply with statutory obligations;
- Encourage each of our Looked After Children to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning.

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving places for them on trips or enrichment activities for which they are eligible.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or Social Worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should, in the first instance, raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and Social Worker.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Designated Teacher will monitor and evaluate the application of this policy and feedback to Governors annually. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or when alterations need to be made.

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| Reviewed by the Leader: | Approved by Governors: | Next review date: |
| Autumn 2022 | Autumn 2022 | Autumn 2025 |