



# **Springfields First School**

## **Children in Care (LAC) Policy**

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### **Who are Looked After Children?**

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the local authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

### **Who are Previously Looked after Children?**

Previously looked-after children are those who are no longer looked after by a local authority because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

This policy includes requirements set out in 'Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under 'section 52 of the Children Act 2004' and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC).

**Governor Responsible: Mr Simon Walsh**

**Designated Lead: Mrs Alison Bagnall and Miss Samantha Stevenson**

### **Aims**

Nationally, looked after children (LAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. At Springfields First School we endeavour to support our LAC and PLAC children to excel in all areas of education, to succeed in everything they aspire to do and to promote health and wellbeing. We recognise that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aim to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body welcome LAC who may be looked after by the local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but live in Staffordshire.

Springfields First School's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After Children
- All LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, the child's carer and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require
- 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
- Achieve 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
- Maintain and respect the child's confidentiality wherever possible
- Ensure staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantage of Looked After Children.

### **Responsibility of the Headteacher**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Ensure reports are provided to all parties involved with the LAC
- Ensure that staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
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### **Responsibility of the Designated Teacher**

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to meet their individual requirements.
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people "looked after" and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are looked after, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils etc;
- To maintain up to date record of the LAC in school, including those in care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people before the Care Plan review.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, the Social Care Departments and the Education Service;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children being looked after e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff who need to know and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date;
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the School Improvement Plan.
- To maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies
- Ensure confidentiality for individuals, sharing information on a need-to-know basis
- Ensure rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy.
- Attend training as required to keep fully informed of the latest developments and policies regarding LAC

### **The responsibility of all staff**

- Have high aspirations for LAC pupil's educational and personal achievement
- Ensure confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively
- Respond promptly to requests for information
- To provide stability and success within school
- Have an understanding of the key issues for a LAC
- Promote the involvement of looked after children in school clubs and extra-curricular activities in accordance with their interests

- promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer and social worker about how they can support his or her progress

### **Responsibility of the Governing Body**

- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors)
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher and that they are able to carry out their responsibilities
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.

To receive a termly report setting out:

1. A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils.
2. The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared with other pupils
3. The level of fixed term exclusion; and
4. Pupil destinations.
5. The number of LAC pupils on the school's roll
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

### **Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium+ Funding**

Pupil Premium is additional funding designed to help disadvantaged pupils of all abilities achieve higher attainment levels and to close the gap between them and their peers.

All LAC children are also eligible for Pupil Premium+ (PP+) funding. PP+ is additional to the funds a school would normally receive for any child attending their setting. The funding should be 'ring fenced' for the individual child and used to help bridge gaps, improve participation, raise attainment and achievement, to improve educational outcomes in addition to the interventions or support a school would normally put in place for any child. For Staffordshire looked after children, Pupil Premium Plus is only released to schools on completion of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) and when a funded smart target is added to their e-PEP account, including a cost breakdown of how the funds will be used for the child. The target then has to be approved by the Virtual School and the funding will be released to the school.

For PLAC children, funding is not 'ring fenced' for the individual child as a personal budget. As a school, we will identify the needs of our PLAC children and use the funding to best meet these needs. Funding may be used for additional staff training, therapeutic interventions, additional staff, extra-curricular activities and school trips.

### **Record keeping and information sharing:**

The Designated teacher will keep an up to date record of LAC in school and will ensure the relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 days of the LAC starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to the LAC. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly. PEP meetings will be held once per term.

**Areas for consideration will include:**

Attendance

Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)

Behaviour

Homework

Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities

Special Needs (if any)

Social and Emotional Needs (if any)

Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and

Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations.

Targets related to the above information

Child views.

It is vital that the LAC is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this will be shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

**Support and resources**

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in the plan.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Headteacher or the Designated Teacher for Children in Care.

**Exclusions**

Springfields First School recognises that LAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi - professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information

**Admission Arrangements**

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a discussion will be held with carer/parent/social worker as appropriate - but always involving someone with parental responsibility. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school induction will take place. It is at this point that who has Parental Responsibility should be determined i.e.. The carer or the social worker.

The school recognises that Looked After Children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (2006)

### **Involving the Young Person**

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

### **Communication with other agencies**

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (end of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Foster Carer or Residential Social Worker.

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child including Social Services, Educational Psychologist, Health Services, CAMHS

### **Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. Springfields First School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.