

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Date approved	November 2023	Approved by	Executive Headteacher
Review cycle	1 year	Signature	
Date for review	November 2024	Author	Director of SEND

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Liz Rogers
Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children: Debs Robinson

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2021) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Single Equalities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

The Respect Collaboration of Schools (The School) is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

With regard to Looked After Children the aims of the Respect Collaboration of Schools are to:

- Ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum
- Provide an-adapted taught curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and abilities
- Ensure that carers, social workers/child practitioners of Looked After Children are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- Ensure that Looked After Children are involved in decisions affecting their future provision
- Where appropriate provide educational input to the Enhanced Care Programme – a multi-agency team offering additional educational, social and emotional support to identified Looked After Children.

This policy links to the following legislation and statutory guidance;

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2022) Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

Who are Looked After Children?

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1983
- Children who are Looked After Children in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi- independent or supported independent accommodation
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst Looked After Children with a parent, as the LA has parental responsibility
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

Who are Previously Looked After Children

- Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society)
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Admissions

Due to care placement changes, Looked After Children may enter The School mid-term and it is vital that they receive a positive welcome. If necessary additional support and pre-entry visits should be offered to help new pupils settle into their base.

Inclusion

This policy recognises the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly based curriculum and reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The School will ensure that appropriate provision is made for all Looked After Children. Where young people need additional one to one support to increase their engagement and help with behavioural issues, this will be done.

Exclusions and Suspensions

Past experiences of Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children will be considered when implementing the behaviour policy. The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any Looked After Children. Due to the nature of the school it would be expected the Virtual School Headteacher would be involved throughout a young person's education. Exclusion for all children is a last resort at Respect Collaboration of Schools.

Allocation of resources

The School ensures that resources are allocated to support appropriate provision for Looked After Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The School will monitor the impact of this funding on the outcomes for Looked After Children.

In order to monitor the appropriate provision, the designated teacher will produce a provision map once a term. This would then need to be cross-referenced with the cost of the additional support provided.

Personal education plans (PEPs)

All young people who are Looked After Children must have a PEP, this may also be referred to as an ePEP, an ePEP is the electronic version of a PEP. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The school will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, these can address things that occur both in and out of school. Appendix 2 examines the guidance for PEP's

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual Looked After Children:

- Looked After Children team in Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists wider SEN team accessed through Virtual School
- Additional support services are prioritised in school including School nurses
- Looked After Children nurses
- NHS and other addiction abuse services
- CAMHS, child psychologists
- Social care worker/community care worker/ child practitioner
- Residential childcare worker
- Youth offending service
- SENDIASS
- Outside education providers
- Voluntary sector agencies such as Safe & Sound, Children First, Young Minds etc.
- ANEW (support young people leaving care in their own accommodation)
- Mentoring services

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The Designated Teacher for the school the child attends will keep an updated list of Looked After Children in school. This list will also include any Looked After Children from other authorities. It is important that Looked After Children status is appropriately flagged up in the school's information systems so that the local authority can also access information. A report to governors is prepared at intervals throughout the year to keep them informed of numbers, resources and highlight other issues such as attendance and suspensions.

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of Looked After Children and previously-Looked After Children are understood and met. These are;

- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured.
- How pupils and parents/carers are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

Staff Development

All staff are encouraged to attend courses or internal training that help them to acquire the skills needed to support Looked After Children. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with Looked After Children.

Looked After Children policy review and evaluation

The Respect Collaboration of Schools considers the Looked After Children policy to be important and, in conjunction with the Governing Body, undertakes a thorough review of both policy and practice in line with the school monitoring and reviewing process. The outcomes of this review are used to inform the School Development Plan.

Appendix 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Looked After Children of involvement in extra curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The School aims to improve life chances and outcomes for all children. Nationally outcomes achieved by Looked After Children have been unacceptably poor and the school is committed to addressing this disparity. As educators and key stakeholders in upholding the principles of corporate parenting on behalf of the local authority we understand the importance and value of vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education
- Listening to children
- Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- Providing stability and continuity
- Promoting inclusion
- Intervening early
- Help children gain access and make use of external services
- Promote high aspirations and secure the best possible outcomes
- Celebrating success

The School Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children
- Ensure all committee members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher for Looked After Children
- Liaise with the head teacher, designated teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met
- The standards committee will consider progress, attendance and other issues relating to Looked After Children as a standard agenda item.
- The Designated Teacher will present an annual summary on progress
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of school learning and extra curricular activities
 - Work experience and careers guidance

Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of Looked After Children in the school.

The Head Teacher will:

- Appointing the designated teacher for Looked After Children and previously-Looked After Children.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
 - The number of Looked After Children and previously-Looked After Children in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of Looked After Children and previously-Looked After Children, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting Looked After Children is a key priority.
- Where appropriate, taking opportunities to support Looked After Children students i.e. attendance rewards
- Promoting actively challenging negative stereotypes of Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children who are on roll at or linked to the Respect Collaboration of Schools
- Keep an updated list of Looked After Children with relevant contact details including the named person with parental responsibility
- Attend relevant training for Looked After Children
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice from the Looked After Children team when appropriate
- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a positive welcome on entering school especially mid year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- Ensure that all Looked After Children have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care (see Derby City's guidance on PEPs) and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEP at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties which cannot be addressed between the base/group and carers
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for Looked After Children
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Children transfers to another educational placements or another base within school
- Contribute information to Looked After Children reviews when required
- Report to the Governing Body regarding provision for Looked After Children and inform relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the Social Worker the appropriate people to invite to parent evenings, etc.
- Prepare reports for the School Governing Body to include:
 - The number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
 - Their attendance compared to other pupils
 - Their attainment (SATS/GCSEs) compared to other pupils
 - The number of suspensions (if any)
 - The destinations of pupils who leave The School

- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SEN Co-ordinator in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.
Provide a Looked After Children Information folder for each base and distribute updated information for this

The school SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for Looked After Children and previously-Looked After Children
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents/carers when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-Looked After Children.

All School Staff will:

- Follow school and local authority procedures and be aware of who Looked After Children pupils are
- Keep the Designated Teacher (DT) informed about changes to timetables/programmes
- Keep the Designated Teacher (DT) informed about a Looked After Children's progress
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children
- Positively promote the raising of a Looked After Children's self esteem
- Ensure any Looked After Children is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the DT where a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties
- Give only official exclusions suspensions and only use exclusions suspensions as a last resort in line with legislation and being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports available when required
- Will produce appropriate documentation to support young people.

The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's Looked After Children, including those placed out-of-authority
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to Looked After Children and previously-Looked After Children
- Working with the school to ensure all Looked After Children in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential
- Acting as the educational advocate for Looked After Children
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-Looked After Children as effectively as possible
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the Looked After Children who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress
- Inform the Headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA
- Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP
- Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all Looked After Children

- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision
- Ensure the education achievement of Looked After Children is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of Looked After Children through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The Local Authority will:

- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Looked After Children
- Ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other Derby City pupil
- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every Looked After Children has a school within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Derby from another authority
- Make sure that each Looked After Children has a PEP according to National Guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer
- Identify a designated officer who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After Children
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of Looked After Children and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs.

Appendix2 PEP Guidance 2018/19- <https://www.derby.gov.uk/education-and-learning/derby-virtual-school/>

Model ePEP Process

Much of the work to make the PEP meeting successful is completed before the meeting. This will allow for more discussion and analysis of how the LAC is doing in school and what can be done to improve outcomes.

If this is not the first PEP much of the information will be pre-populated and it is a case of reviewing the information for accuracy.

Try to ensure that there is internet access in the PEP meeting room and that school and social worker have their laptops.

Before the meeting

The social worker should review/complete:

- the “About Me” page of the ePEP (the attendance can be filled in during the meeting)

Schools should review/complete the pages:

- **My Views (pupil voice) / My Education / What my schools says / My Special Needs / My Progress and Attainment**

My Targets - schools should be considering if the previous targets have been achieved; what would be appropriate for future SMART targets; and the associated pupil premium plus costs.

At the PEP meeting – follow the suggested agenda

Each page in the ePEP should be reviewed for new information and discussed. Key pages which will generally need most discussion are:

- “My Progress and Attainment” and “My Targets and Pupil Premium Plus”

The previous targets should be reviewed and a judgement made on whether they have been achieved.

New targets should be set and agreed at the meeting taking into account the meeting discussion and the pupil voice. Targets need to be Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time limited (SMART). Examples of good targets are provided. If you have internet access agree and write them in the meeting challenging each other on whether the targets are SMART.

- “My Next PEP” - Set the date, time and venue for the next PEP meeting

If all the information has been entered and agreed at the meeting sign it off to tell the Virtual School it is complete. The Virtual School will then quality assure the PEP.

After the meeting

If all the information was not available at the PEP meeting this should be added within two weeks and signed off. The Virtual School will then quality assure the PEP.

PEP Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Complete attendance information at bottom of "About Me" page
3. Review of ePEP pages

ePEP page	Key questions and discussion
About me	Any changes in Pupil Information, Care Information or Contact Information?
My Views	Has the pupil been able to give their views?
My Education	Any changes to school details? What is the view about attendance, exclusions and provision?
What my school says	School reports to the meeting how the LAC is doing in school
My Special needs	Have any special needs been identified or have there been any changes? Have any additional SEND documents been uploaded into the documents section? Have appropriate arrangements been made for transition?
My Progress and Att	What progress is being made in school? If it is less than expected what is being done to address this? Will the SMART targets and PP+ request look to address this lack of progress? How well are they attaining in relation to the national expectation for their year group? If they are "working towards" the national standard are additional resources being put in place?
My Targets and PP+	Have the previous targets been achieved? Do the new targets support what has been said at the meeting and the pupil voice? Ask the question is this target – specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and time limited? If the answer is not yes it needs to be rewritten. What previous other decisions need reviewing? What other decisions need to be recorded?
My School move	Are there any issues which need recording around moving schools? This is particularly important at transition points.
Careers pages	"My Careers Information" and "Transition after Y11" will appear on Y8 and above PEPs. Has careers advice been given? What aspirations have the pupil?
My Next PEP	Agree the date, time and location of the next PEP meeting. Record the date, time and location of the LAC Review if known.

4. Can the PEP be signed off today? If not, what date is to be agreed that the additional information will be inputted by?
5. Any other business
6. Thanks and close meeting