



PEAR TREE
COMMUNITY
JUNIOR SCHOOL

With trust & care we will grow & flourish

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

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| Approved by: | A Badwal | Date: 09.09.2021 |
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| Last reviewed on: | September 2021 |
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| Next review due by: | September 2022 |
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Rationale

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of LAC have suffered a disrupted childhood and experienced adverse events. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. LAC often achieve poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer Looked After Children progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

Legal Framework

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 fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (Sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (Section 21)

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.

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.

For all children who receive more than 75 days of ‘short breaks’ in every 12 months LAC status applies and an independent Reviewing Officer is appointed. As the care arranged is not continuous academic attainment does not have to be reported in the same way to the DfE.

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.

The Name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is: Mrs Arvinder Badwal

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;

Within School:

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Looked After Children and that staff understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Looked After Children, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading scheme and school
- To act as an advocate for Looked After Children;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers, health professionals and the Derby City Virtual School;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all Looked After Children, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up-to-date. It is important to be aware that some children in care do not want all adults or peers to know about their accommodation or care status;
- To monitor the educational progress, attainment and attendance of Looked After Children.
- To include targets on the performance of LAC within the School Development Plan.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement, absence from school or internal truancy.
- To celebrate the success of all Looked After Children.

Work with Individual Looked After Children

- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their care plan;
- To help ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan (the PEP should be initiated by the young person's social worker from the Authority responsible for them). The PEP sets out appropriate targets and support available;
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium which applies to LAC who have been in care 6 months and over is targeted at improving attainment and achievements. A summary of the impact of the Pupil Premium should be included on the school website.
- To consult with the child or young person and ensure they have an appropriate adult who will attend school events e.g. parents' evenings; sports; drama events to provide support and encouragement.

Liaison with other Partners

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register, ensuring all LAC in school are safeguarded.
- To help an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) co-ordinate education and Looked After Children review meetings, so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the child's Care Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to Looked After Children at care planning meetings and PEP meetings.
- To be the named contact for colleagues in Derby City Council Virtual School and other local authorities as appropriate.
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information and school records between agencies and other schools.
- To ensure the school admits Looked After Children in line with the Admissions Code of Practice; schools should admit all LAC separate to 'In Year Fair Access Protocols'.
- To ensure that the Head Teacher considers a range of strategies before exclusion for a LAC, which should be a last resort.

Training

To attend training for Designated Teachers as appropriate.

To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.

Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for;

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:
 - a) Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
 - b) Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and previously-LAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and previously-LAC.
- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school. Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, 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 LAC and previously-LAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-LAC as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for LAC.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - a) Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - b) Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
 - c) Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
 - d) Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC. Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.

- e) Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- f) Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- 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 LAC and previously-LAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, 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 LAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for previously-LAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and previously-LAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern
- Affecting the care leaver.

The SENCO is responsible for:

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

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and previously-LAC and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and previously-LAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and previously-LAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously-LAC.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.
- 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 with other professionals and the child's carers will 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, including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations
- Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
- Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or previously-LAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment. Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

The PEP will be updated at least every six months, as part of the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by Children's Social Care. The PEP will be stored on the local authority ICS case management system and circulated to all key parties who attended the PEP meeting.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records (including the PEP) will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker. A date will be agreed for a new Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of a new LAC being admitted. An appropriate school admissions meeting will take place. In some cases it may be helpful to provide a mentor from within or external to the school community.

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. It is good practice to consult and share with a young person appropriate records that are held by school and the local authority. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the social worker, and their carer(s) are working together to help them achieve in school.

Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (eg end of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Foster Carer or Residential Social Worker. It should be agreed at the PEP meeting what information parents will receive, this needs to be in line with the legal framework. A Social Worker will be able to advise on correspondence with parents and approaches to normalise consent for routine school activities.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each looked-after pupil will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that the Social Worker takes a lead in developing. This will identify, success, specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. The PEP developed by North Yorkshire County Council is age group specific. Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance;
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Behaviour;
- Homework;
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities;
- Special 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).

Derby City Council will:

- Provide a Virtual Head Teacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After Children
- Provide a specialist team to provide targeted support for Looked After Children as part of the Derby City Virtual School
- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Looked After Children
- Ensure that the education for this group of pupils is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every Looked After Child has a school to go to within 20 school days of coming into care or of coming to Derby City from another authority
- Make sure that each Looked After Child 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
- Liaise with local Collaborative panels, Enhanced Mainstream Primary Schools and Pupil Referral Service over alternative educational provision
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4
- Provide advice and guidance for those LAC and Care Leavers in Further and Higher Education
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special education needs of Looked After Children and work collaboratively with schools, other services and agencies to meet those needs
- Hold events that celebrate the achievement of LAC
- Consider the views of all LAC through a variety of strategies including the Young Person's Council

Derby City Virtual School Key Contacts

| Name | Role | Email | Telephone number |
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