

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY



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Approved by:	Ms Tanya Douglas - Head Teacher	Date: January 2024
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INTRODUCTION

At Chace Community School we are committed to providing a quality education experience for all students. We recognise that, nationally, students in care have significantly underachieved compared to their peers and are committed to challenging this at Chace. We intend to promote and monitor the inclusion, well-being and achievement of looked after students at Chace.

Whatever the background or circumstances of children at Chace, we aim to support students to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Chace Governing Body takes its corporate parenting responsibilities very seriously and considers the needs of looked after children at the planning and policy level through to monitoring and evaluation in every area of school life. The Governing Body will ensure that the Headteacher and the designated teacher have sufficient support and resources to carry out their responsibilities in respect of looked after students and will make sure that all governors and teachers are fully aware of the legal requirements and national and local guidance on the education of children in care.

The Legal Framework

This policy and all school systems to support looked after children are mindful of the following:

- Education Act 2002 section 175 (Duties of LEAs and governing bodies in relation to the welfare of children)
- Children Act 1989
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Children (Leaving Care) 2000
- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (2018)
- Keeping children safe in education 2023 – Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children—statutory guidance for local authorities (2018)

In line with national guidance on how to improve the attainment of looked after children in schools, we are committed to supporting our looked after children by:

1. Doing the things we do for all children but more so.
2. Balancing high levels of support with real challenge.
3. Linking each child to a key person they relate well to.
4. Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships with them.
5. Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies to put the support in place they need.
6. Making things happen for them and seeing things through.
7. Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility in the support we offer them.

8. Actively extending the horizons of each child.
9. Planning for future transitions

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy a child 'looked after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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.

A child is in 'state care' outside of England and Wales if s/he is in 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.

Chace Community School recognises that 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children' may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Roles and Responsibilities Supporting the Designated Teacher

The Headteacher

Every school must have a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). The Headteacher must ensure:

- An appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave
- That procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC and PLAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC and PLAC to all parties involved.
- That staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will support the designated teacher in their leadership role helping staff to understand the things that can affect how looked after children learn and achieve and to champion the attainment of individual looked after children by:

- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies to make sure they do not put LAC or PLAC students at a disadvantage.
- Making sure that there are effective and well-understood procedures in place to support individual LAC and PLAC student's learning.
- Promoting a culture in which LAC and PLAC students believe they can achieve highly and feel they can discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets.
- Maintaining an overview of the needs and progress of looked after students, including making sure the schools makes full use of data to monitor individual progress.

- Co-ordinating and advocating for any additional support and making sure looked after children are prioritised when selecting students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition.
- Working closely with Special Educational Needs staff to ensure early assessment if a pupil is experiencing difficulties and arranging urgent meetings if he/she is at risk of exclusion.
- Promoting good home-school links with the child's carer about how they can support his/her progress.
- Having lead responsibility for development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the school, in partnership with others.
- Being or helping identify someone in the school to act as a key contact for each looked after child/young person, who they trust and can talk to. This need not be the designated teacher, or indeed a member of teaching staff at all, but should take account of the wishes of the child.
- Helping looked after students to make informed option choices for their abilities, aspirations and interests and making sure they have the support they need to do as well as possible in exams.
- Contributing to decisions relating to the use of Personal Education Allowances (PEAs), allocated by the local authority to students who are identified as falling behind their peers.
- Monitoring attendance of looked after students.
- Ensuring confidentiality for students, sharing personal information only on a need-to-know basis.

The designated teacher's responsibilities begin with the admission of the pupil to school, ensuring that the child and carer are welcomed and that a smooth induction is achieved, especially if admission is other than at normal admission times (i.e. term-time admissions [TTAs] when settling into school might be more difficult.).

Designated teachers and Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for LAC and PLAC assessing services and support and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them." It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC and PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.

- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC and PLAC say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.

The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will ensure a suitable designated teacher for looked after students is in place and will consider reports from him/her annually at Teaching and Learning Committee. They also:

- Make sure the designated teacher is a member of teaching staff with the right levels of seniority, experience and status to provide leadership, training and advice to others.
- Work with the head teacher to make sure the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to respond to the teaching and learning needs of looked after children.
- Maintain an oversight of how well the role is working and monitor the progress of students in care
- Receive a report annually from the designated teacher. This should highlight:
 - Any workload issues arising as a result of the number of children looked after on the role.
 - Levels of progress made by looked after children in relation to all children (including educational, social and emotional progress).
 - Whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked after children is different to that of all children.
 - Any process or planning issues arising from Personal Education Plans.
 - Whether any looked after children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met.
 - Whether any have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being met
 - How the teaching and learning needs of looked after children are reflected in school development plans and are being met.
 - What training the designated teacher has had to enable them to impart knowledge and understanding about the education and well-being of looked after children to other staff.
 - What work with partners such as the local authority has taken place.
 - The impact of any of the school's policies (e.g. on charging for educational visits or extended school activity) on looked after children.

The report will not mention children by name, to protect their confidentiality.
- Consider this report and what needs to be done to respond to any issues raised in the report.

Governors ensure that all staff are made aware of the additional needs of looked after students and are given some understanding of the reasons that children and young people are taken into the care of the local authority. Given sufficient understanding and support, every member of staff will be encouraged to:

- Have high expectations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after students.
- Ensure that all students in care are supported sensitively, respecting confidentiality and responding positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff.
- Respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information.
- Promote the self-esteem and success of looked after students and work towards increased stability for them, ensuring that no child in care is stigmatised in any way.

The Governing Body makes sure all governors maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of looked after children's needs, through commitment to induction and on-going training as necessary.

They appoint a **Nominated Governor** for looked after students who will fulfil a reporting role within the governing body, liaising with the designated teacher to secure information regarding the number of looked after students in school (if any) and statistical information relating to their attendance, attainment and fixed term and permanent exclusions. They will make sure the governing body receives the regular reports on the attainment and wellbeing of these children. This information and any other details about students will be collected and reported in ways that preserve anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the students concerned.

The Nominated Governor will also ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after students' appropriate priority in respect of:

- *Admission to school*
- *National Curriculum entitlement and entry to public examinations*
- *Stringent target setting*
- *Additional educational support where appropriate, including Personal Education Allowances*
- *Extra-curricular activities*
- *Work experience and careers guidance*

The Nominated Governor will commit to attending training to keep their knowledge and understanding up to date, to identifying the training needs of the governing body in relation to looked after children and to encouraging attendance on training programmes.

Procedures for Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is monitored continually and evaluated every two years in response to such factors as:

- changes in the legislative framework;
- changing local social and demographic needs and circumstances;
- changes in school personnel;

This policy supports and should be read in conjunction with the school's Single Equalities Policy, Additional Educational Needs Policy and the LA Admissions Policy.

The policy is monitored and reviewed every year by SLT and Governors through the Governors' Curriculum Committee.