



MARLBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) POLICY

Introduction

Marlborough Primary School and Nursery is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on the principles of inclusion and equality of access and opportunity. This policy includes requirements set out in Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC. We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances i.e. to:

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

Definition

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a Local Authority if they are in the care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Local Authority. They fall into four main groups i.e. children who are:

- Accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- The subjects of a care order or interim care order
- The subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- Compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the Local Authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement

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. 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. 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.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children and that the Governing body discharges its responsibility as identified in Chapter 7 of the Guide to the Law for School Governors.
- To ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- To provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- To ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- To ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- To ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision

Admissions

In accordance with the published admissions criteria the Governing Body fully support the principle that children in public care should be given the highest priority and recognises that these children are among the most vulnerable groups in society.

Inclusion

In accordance with our Inclusion Policy we acknowledge that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC pupils and that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, thereby meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Monitoring the progress of LAC

The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher i.e. Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Inclusion and Child Protection.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the LAC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development

The designated teacher will attend relevant training and have access to support and advise in order to ensure they have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to discharge their responsibilities. We also encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

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

- LAC teams
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care workers/ Community care workers

LAC policy review and evaluation

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review and regular review of both policy as part of the agreed governing body review cycle. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School's Leadership Team and Designated Teacher

- To consider the the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the school community
- Know who are all the LAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about LAC
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate.
- Ensure that LAC 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 LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- 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 adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC
- 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 LAC
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- Report to the Governing Body on LAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents'/carers' evenings etc
- Prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include: the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan, their attendance compared to other pupils, their attainment compared to other pupils, the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions and the destinations of pupils who leave the school
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs (SEN) are addressed in conjunction with and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN

Roles and Responsibilities – Continued

The Governing Body

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- Liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of admission to school, National Curriculum, out of school learning and extra curricular activities, annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC

Summary

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. This may be caused by factors such as experiencing high levels of disruption and change in school and family placements and frequently results in underachievement. The school is committed to addressing any disparities in achievements for LAC by giving priority to education, listening to children, providing stability and continually and taking responsibility for promoting inclusion, intervening early, promoting early years experiences and acknowledging their successes.