

Denby Dale First and Nursery Policy for Looked After Children

This policy was presented to governors on 13th May 2015

We are aware that Looked After Children constitute a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taken into Public Care, but they are also individuals and members of other groups. We will take this into account when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatisation.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

Objectives

Looked After Children in this School will

- Receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support
- Have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

Teachers and other staff in this school will

- Receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and psychological well-being of Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them.
- Plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher and Senior Management will

- Identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place.
- Ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies.

1. Induction

We ensure a supportive and sympathetic induction for Looked After Children admitted to our school.

A named member of staff supports the child's start to school. A meeting is held with the carers to ensure information is passed on and all staff working with the Looked After Child are aware of who has parental responsibility and who they should contact.

2. Pastoral Support

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support the following there is a named member of staff, plus the designated teacher that they can talk to. The school will liaise with the appropriate outside agencies to provide any extra support that is needed.

3. Information

- The Designated Teacher will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the Designated Teacher will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.
- Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Designated Teacher of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information, to be determined by the head teacher.
- The Designated Teacher will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is in order to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school. The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the young person.
- Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected at least termly.
- This information will be analysed by the Designated Teacher to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.
- Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected through the registers by the School Business Support Officer.
- This information will be analysed by the Head Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.
- Information about the Behaviour of Looked After Children will be collected by the Head Teacher through the class teacher, behaviour logs, etc.
- This information will be analysed by the Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion so early intervention can take place.

4. Strategies

4.1 Curriculum

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The Designated Teacher will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff,

- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties.
- Talk to the child.
- Follow the schools SEN policy
- Use outside agencies as appropriate e.g. Educational Psychologist

We recognise that there are factors which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as highly as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that underachievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results. If progress is not as could be expected individual targets will be set, extra support provided and the SEN policy followed.

We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example to mark Mother's Day or to investigate family history, may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities.

4.2. Attendance

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Head Teacher to gain their support and collect any relevant information.
- The Education Support Team for Looked After Children will be alerted.
- The school will follow the Procedures outlined in the Attendance Policy.

4.3. Behaviour

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Head Teacher as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.
- The School Behaviour Policy will be followed and if exclusion seems likely a referral to SPR will be made.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, PRS and EST will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the problem behaviour. The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with the Designated Teacher.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring we will put supportive programmes in place e.g. a named member of support staff to work with the child, space for time out, specific teaching of PSHCE either as part of a small group or individually.

4.4. Homework

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete homework, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so. The following strategies are in place to help Looked After Children complete homework tasks as set for their peers.

The opportunity to complete homework in Breakfast or After School Club, differentiated homework, support from a member of staff to check understanding.

4.5. Extra-Curricular Activities

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school based activities because of poor relationships with their peers, for example. As we believe it is essential that Looked After Children are able to play a full part in school life, the following strategies are in place to help them to do this:

- The Designated Teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities.

The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiatives will be monitored and evaluated by

- Collection and analysis of information.
- Discussion with school staff, carers, Social Workers and staff from LA Support Services, both informally and during meetings e.g. those set up to write Personal Education Plans.
- Discussions with Looked After Children.

The responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of school strategies lies with the Designated Teacher.

5. Liaison with Outside Agencies

To ensure that all those involved in the education and care of Looked After Children work together in their best interests, the Designated Teacher will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives.
- Liaising with Social Workers to ensure all Looked After Children have a Personal Educational Plan.
- Participation in and co-ordination of Review and Planning Meetings for Looked After Children. Statutory school procedures such as Annual Reviews for children with Statements of SEN will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible or appropriate.

In addition, school management will do everything possible to enable class teachers or other appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Designated Teacher is Jackie Wood

The role of the Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school.

The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Designated Teacher will

- Attend training sessions organised by the LA
- Cascade this training to school staff
- Arrange and, or deliver training to all staff, including those newly appointed, on issues affecting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and the ways in which educational disadvantage can be overcome.
- Work closely with Social Workers and other staff to enable the writing of effective Personal Educational Plans which will inform Care Plans.
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them, to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans.

6.2. The Head Teacher and Senior Management

The responsibility for the educational and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Head Teacher, although some of the day to day tasks may be delegated to other staff. Working with the Senior Management Team, the Head Teacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff are enabled to carry them out.

6.3. The named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Liz Moore

The named Governor and Designated Teacher will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis

- The number of Looked After Pupils in the School
- A comparison of test scores for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- The levels of fixed term/permanent exclusions

The named Governor must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory assessments
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities

7. Evaluation

The general success and appropriateness of this policy will be evaluated annually.

The next review will be May 2016

