



CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER POLICY

Crofton Infant and Junior Schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Staff Responsible:	Inclusion Leader
Date of Review:	September 2017
Date of Next Review:	September 2019

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Date	Change
March 2018	Policy moved to new format

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Purpose

To promote the educational attainment, achievement, progression and welfare of Children Looked After.

Rationale

Children Looked After (CLA) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of CLA have suffered a disrupted childhood and experienced adverse events. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under-achievement when compared to their peers. CLA often achieve poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer Children Looked After 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.

All these groups are said to be “Looked After Children” (LAC). They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Bromley.

The named Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is:

Debbie Weaver

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After:

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Children Looked After 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 Children Looked After, and to promote the involvement of these children in extra-curricular activities, out of school visits, school councils, etc.;
- To act as an advocate for Children Looked After ;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers and health professionals;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all Children Looked After, 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 and report annually to the governing body on their attainment and progress.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement or absence from school;
- To celebrate the success of all Children Looked After.

Work with Individual Children Looked After

- To enable the pupil to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Child Centred Plan where appropriate;
- To help ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) (this should be initiated by the pupil's social worker from the authority responsible for them). The PEP sets out appropriate targets and support available;
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus which applies to LAC is targeted at improving attainment and achievements of the individual pupils concerned.

Liaison with other Partners

- 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 Centred Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways at care planning meetings and PEP meetings;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information and school records between agencies and other schools;

Training

- To develop a knowledge of vulnerable children and education inclusion procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority and other providers;
- To attend training for Designated Teachers as appropriate;
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.

The named Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After is:

Claire Harris

The role of that Governor:

- The named governor will ensure that the Governing Body receives reports on an annual basis (unless it will be easy to identify individual children whereby work on behalf of all vulnerable groups may be more appropriate):
- The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedure ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:

-the Curriculum;

-additional educational support where necessary.

Responsibility for Children Looked After in School

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the pupil are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After

It is appropriate for Learning Support Assistants to have knowledge that the pupil is being looked-after only when they are directly involved in the teaching of the pupil or the direct supervision of them during breaks and lunch times.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the pupil's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records (including the PEP) will be requested from the pupil's previous school, if applicable, 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 CLA being admitted.

Involving the Pupil

It is important that a pupil is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding.

Communication with Other Agencies

Crofton Infant and Crofton Junior School will ensure copies of all reports (e.g. end of year reports) are forwarded to the pupil'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 and record this in the PEP.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each looked-after pupil will have a Child Centred Plan that will include a PEP that the Social Worker takes a lead in developing. This will identify, success, specific areas of concern and include achievable targets.

The PEP will be reviewed and updated termly in addition to the annual meeting, as part of the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by Children's Social Care. The PEP will be circulated to all key parties who attended the PEP meeting.