



SCHOOL POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

Cavendish Close Infant & Nursery School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

Designated Teacher for LAC Mrs A J Brandon
Nominated Governor with responsibility for LAC Mrs C Moore
Headteacher of the Virtual School for Looked after children: Graeme Fergusson.
Guidance from Governance handbook (DfE Nov 2015, p 46/47)

The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. 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:

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

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
- ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

See Appendix 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

Who are Looked After Children?

Under the Children Act 1989, the term 'looked after' is the legal term for children in care.

A child is looked after under the following circumstances:

- The child is in accommodation commissioned and provided by the local authority for more than 24 hours.
- The child is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order, Interim Care Order or Care order either living at home or placed away from home with relatives, friends or local authority carers.
- The child is remanded to local authority care.
- The child is subject to a Care Order under the Children Act 1989
- The child is placed for adoption but the adoption order has not been made.
- The child is an unaccompanied minor
- The child is in receipt of Short Term Breaks as part of a family Support plan for periods of 24 hours or more.(These children are only looked after for the time that they are placed away from home and do not need to be on the register of Looked After Children; neither do they need a Personal education Plan).

A child ceases to be looked after when:

- The child returns to live at home and is not the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care order or Emergency Protection Order.
- The child reaches independence and is not the subject of a Care Order.
- The child reaches 18
- The child dies
- The child is adopted
- The child is made subject to a special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangement order.

Admissions

The Governing Body endorses council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. This stance is also endorsed by the Derby City Admissions Forum. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

Priority for admissions through the Local authority must be given to looked after children, children adopted from care under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, and those who left care under a 'Special Guardianship Order'

Inclusion

This policy recognises 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.

Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, 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 (ePEP) - 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 and noted on the PEP.

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

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

- Derby Virtual School for LAC
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- medical officers
- school nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service
- Multi-Agency teams

LAC policy review and evaluation

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.

APPENDIX 1

Looked After Children say...

- “I would like to have a say as to whether I move school or not.”
- “Money should not be the most important thing when deciding if I should move schools.”
- “I would really like to have a chance to visit the school before I start.”
- “I would like my school work and achievements to be passed on to my new school and not forgotten about.”
- “I would have liked a buddy or peer mentor when I moved to my new school to help me get settled.”
- “We want to be treated as normal. We don’t want to be pitied or treated differently.”
- “I’d like to be able to choose a particular teacher to talk to – not just the designated teacher.”
- “I want to keep my life private. I don’t want people knowing everything about me unless I say so.”
- “I don’t want my teachers hearing embarrassing/personal details about me and my family at review meetings.”
- “I want my own copy of school reports and I want my parents to have a copy.”
- “The head of year is extremely important in passing on ‘need to know’ information to individual subject teachers.”

APPENDIX 2

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children – 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. For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- lack of involvement in extra curricular activities.
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect.

To date the outcomes achieved by LAC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for LAC within school
- give regard to 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 (see Derby City's guidance on PEPs in Appendix 3) 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' 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 –e PEP.
 - their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils.
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC.
- arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to school
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- follow school procedures.
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress.
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC.
- positively promote the raising of a LAC's self esteem.
- ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.

- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC is experiencing difficulties
- give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfES 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 and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of school learning and extra curricular activities
 - work experience and careers guidance.
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC.
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC.

The Local Authority will:

- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC
- ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other Derby City pupil
- ensure that LAC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Derby from another authority
- make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- 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, and at any mid-phase transfer
- identify a designated officer who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC
- be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs.

Derby City Virtual School Contact Details:

Graeme Fergusson	Virtual School Headteacher
	Email graeme.fergusson@derby.gov.uk
	Telephone 01332 640362
	Mobile 07812301044
Kate Harm	Specialist officer for LAC
	Email: kate.harm@derby.gov.uk
	Telephone 01332 641439
	Mobile 07812300954
Catherine Ward	Specialist Officer for LAC
	Email catherine.ward@derby.gov.uk
	Telephone 01332 640346
	Mobile 07391414150
Liz Williams	Project Support Administrator
	Email elizabeth.williams@derby.gov.uk
	Telephone 01332 640342

Policy Change History Sheet

Policy title: <u>Children Looked After Policy</u>		
<u>Review Date</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Summary of change</u>
<u>Spring 2012</u>		<u>No change</u>
October 2014	Named LAC teacher	Alteration of name of LAC officer
October 2016	Various	Alteration of definitions, LAC designated governor, and teacher, and LA office. Plus contact details for LA