



WEST BUCKLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY

West Buckland Primary School and Nursery

Looked After Children Policy

1. Policy Name

Children Looked After (CLA) Policy

2. Definitions

- A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Wellbeing 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 has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and
- A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the 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.

3. Policy Statement

We recognise that, nationally, pupils in public care have significantly underachieved compared with their peers. We intend, through this policy, to promote the inclusion, wellbeing and achievement of looked after children. The Governing Body is committed in particular to implementing the joint guidance from the DFE and Department of Health on the education of young people in public care. This sets out six principles:

- Prioritising education,
- Having high expectations,
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes,
- Achieving stability and continuity,
- Early intervention and priority action, and
- Listening to children.

The guidance introduced two key measures to improve the educational life chances for children in public care:

- Designated teachers for every school, and
- Personal Education Plans for all pupils in public care.

Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. National attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non-looked-after children.

The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Role of The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen ... (who) should be an advocate for the young people in public care, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them”.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Take lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children.
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer.
- Be a central point of initial contact within the school in order to minimise any disruption to a child’s learning.
- In conjunction with the child’s social worker, ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed within 12 weeks of the child joining the school.
- In conjunction with the social worker ensure that the Personal Education Plan is reviewed every 6 months.
- Ensure that each pupil in public care 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.
- Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school’s roll.
- Promote a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- Work alongside Virtual School Heads (VSHs) and the Local Authority to provide a wide range of support to promote educational achievement.
- Co-ordinate any support that is necessary within the school.
- Encourage pupils in public care to join extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure as far as possible attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Set up urgent meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training, and act as an advisor to staff and to governors.
- Ensure transitions to the next phase of child’s education are supported effectively including transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Promote good home-school links.

4.2 The Responsibilities Of All Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of young people in public care.
- Ensure that all pupils in public care are supported sensitively.
- Show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status.
- Respond positively to a pupil’s request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.

- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable pupils in public care to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all pupils in public care; maintain confidentiality; and ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour.
- Appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and the child's own understanding of how they are being supported.

4.3 Responsibilities of The Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities effectively.
- Support the Head, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of pupils in public care are recognised and met.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of pupils in public care.
- Ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of admission to school; the National Curriculum and public examinations; additional educational support where this is needed and extracurricular activities.
- Through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the Pupil Premium + grant is used) and their level of progress.
- Nominate a Governor to take special interest in this area of the school's work.

4.4 Responsibility of The Nominated Governor

The Nominated Governor will liaise with the Designated Teacher and report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of looked after pupils in school.
- Their attendance as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
- The progress made as a discreet group compared to other pupils.
- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- The destinations of pupils who leave the school.

The information for this report will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

5. Policy Principles

5.1 Training

The Head Teacher/Designated Teacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.