

# Earlsmead Primary School

## Looked After Children Policy



**SUCCESS *for ALL***

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## MISSION STATEMENT

At Earlsmead Primary School, our mission is to empower every child through *Head, Heart, and Hands*. We cultivate curious minds (Head), nurture compassionate spirits (Heart), and develop the practical skills (Hands) needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

## OUR VISION

Everyone achieving to their full potential.

## OUR MOTTO

**Head, Heart, Hands**

## OUR VALUES

- |        |                         |                       |
|--------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Head:  | 1. <b>Curiosity</b>     | 2. <b>Achievement</b> |
| Heart: | 3. <b>Integrity</b>     | 4. <b>Care</b>        |
| Hands: | 5. <b>Collaboration</b> | 6. <b>Creativity</b>  |

## Aims

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) fully complies with the statutory guidance on roles and responsibilities alongside any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State in order to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met and understood. This policy is part of our approach to being a trauma-informed school.

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for LAC.
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC, and also supports other staff to do this.
- Staff, parents and carers are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and their responsibilities.

## Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC) refers to a child 'looked-after by a local authority' as outlined by section 22 Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

LAC are children who are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours and include children who are:

- Living with foster parents/ carers
- Living in residential children's home or
- Living in residential settings like schools or secure units

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) refers to children who are

'...no longer looked after in England or 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 when the child is to live with any persons, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.'

## Introduction

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

This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Guidance on the Education of Looked After Children" (May 2000) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004. Children who are "looked after" may be "Accommodated" "In Care" or "remanded/ detained" as follows:

### **Accommodated (Section 20)**

This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

## **In Care**

A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

## **Remanded/Detained**

A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:

- An emergency protection order.
- Removed by police using their powers of protection.
- Remanded by a court following criminal charges.
- A court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

Looked After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others.
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. The governing body of Earlsmead Primary School, is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Regular discussion and analysis around the progress (academic and otherwise) of all LAC and PLAC children.
- Personal targets and education plans where appropriate.
- Personal targets and education plans for all Local Authority LAC.
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- Effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group.

## **Role and Responsibilities**

The Designated Teacher should:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children.
- Ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status for LAC that are new to the school.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months; A flow chart showing PEP completion is found at the end of this policy.

- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings.
- Ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher).
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis.
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible.
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible.
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff**

The staff of this school will:

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- Ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way.
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting.
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children.
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Governing Body**

The governing body of this school will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children.

- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names).
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children.
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met.
- Provide regular progress reports and feedback to the governing body (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons).
- Review the effective implementation of this policy at least every three years.

### **Confidentiality**

- Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

### **Training**

The Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

### **Personal Education Plan Completion**

- Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school).
- Date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
- A date is set for the next pep meeting Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.
- PEP sent by SW to the LAC team.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the LAC Designated Teacher or Headteacher.

### **Links with Other Earlsmead Policies**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour
- Exclusions
- SEND Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Data Protection
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs.
- Admissions Policy and Arrangements