



# Holte School

## Looked After Children Policy

<b>Lead member of staff:</b>	Lee Farmer (Assistant Headteacher, Pastoral & Designated Teacher for LAC)
<b>Legislation Status: (Statutory/Non-Statutory)</b>	Non-statutory
<b>Local Authority Model Policy or School Written Policy:</b>	School Written Policy
<b>Required on school website:</b>	Yes
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<b>Signed By Chair Of Governors:</b> <b>Ms C Hardy</b>	C Hardy

## **1. Our vision for 'Looked after Children'**

1.1 At Holte School we are fully committed to providing the very best support to all students to enable them to reach their full potential. We are committed to enabling all students to equally access the best teaching, learning and student support networks to allow them to take every opportunity to achieve the very best academic and personal outcomes.

1.2 As such we are committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of 'Looked after Children' (LAC). All members of our school community will:

- aspire to provide 'Looked after Children' with the appropriate care in order that they thrive in school,
- nurture respect for 'Looked after Children'. This is central in ensuring they achieve their full potential,
- endeavour to enable 'Looked after Children' to foster the determination needed to achieve their best, enjoy school and benefit from a wide range of social and extra-curricular opportunities,
- recognise that all students, including 'Looked after Children', have the right to be supported in realising their potential.

1.3 This policy provides the framework in which all staff operate to ensure that the specific additional needs of 'Looked after Children' are effectively met and that all Looked after Children are fully supported so that they are fully engaged in their education and achieve good academic outcomes. As such we fully embrace our responsibility to, "safeguard Looked after Children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure they are able to achieve and reach their full potential'. (Section 52, The Children Act 1989, amended by The Children and Families Act 2004.)

1.4 We are committed to creating a safe and inspiring place for all children to learn and develop, where children's rights are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive as individuals and as a community. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is at the heart of our ethos and our curriculum.

The four guiding principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the child state that:

- All children are entitled to the same rights without discrimination of any kind.
- All actions concerning children will take into account the best interests of the individual child or group of children as the primary consideration.
- All children have the right to survival and development.
- Children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them.

Holte School is committed to the guiding principles of the Convention and is actively committed to promoting all articles of the convention in all areas of the school and its work. The following articles are protected and promoted through this policy – 18, 20, 21, 25).

## **2. Definition of a 'Looked after Child'**

2.1 The term 'Looked after Children' is defined in law under the Children Act 1989. 'Looked after' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing corporate parental responsibility. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

2.2 'Looked after children' fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under voluntary agreement with their parents
- Children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order
- Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection
- 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.

2.3 Children are NOT Looked After when they are:

- Receiving services from Social Services under Section 17 only. Section 17 refers to the Local Authority's responsibility to assess and provide services for children in need.
- A final adoption order is made
- living in private fostering arrangements.
- subject to a Residence Order or a Supervision Order. Section 08
- on the Child Protection Register. Section 27

2.4 The local authority is empowered to provide accommodation for any child if it will safeguard or promote his or her welfare.

2.5 The Birmingham Virtual School comprises teams of teachers, learning mentors, instructors and professional support staff who work in partnership to ensure that 'Looked after Children' can fulfil their educational potential.

The service includes outreach teams offering peripatetic support & intervention and a split-site Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) providing onsite education options for 'Looked after Children.' The local authority's Virtual School for LAC which:

"Oversees the education of children in care in the authority, and those children in the authority's care who are placed out of the authority, as if they were in a single school".

### **3. Previously looked-after children**

3.1 Local authorities have a duty under section 23ZZA of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in their area.

3.2 Previously looked-after children are those who:

- are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or
- were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

3.3 The duty applies to children who are in early year's provision (secured by the local authority under section 7(1) of the Childcare Act 2006) and continues throughout the compulsory years of education where the child is in provision funded in part or in full by the state.

3.4 We are committed to promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after children. The Designated LAC is responsible for monitoring the progress of such students and promoting their educational achievement.

## **4. The context for 'Looked after Children'**

4.1 'Looked after Children' are a particularly vulnerable group and there is concern that they may be at a disadvantage within the broader education system; for example the government feels that:

- Nationally, a large percentage of 'Looked after Children' leave school with no qualifications.
- 'Looked after Children' are far more likely to be excluded from school than the general population.
- 'Looked after Children' are less likely to continue on to further education.

More specifically, 'Looked after Children' are more likely to experience:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Underachievement in further and higher education

4.2. All governors and staff at Holte School are fully committed to significantly narrowing these gaps in outcomes, and if possible eradicating them altogether.

4.3 This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of 'Looked after Children' under section 252 of the Children Act 2004 and Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children: statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018).

## 5. Guiding Principles

5.1 In order to achieve the aims of narrowing or eradicating the gaps between the achievement of 'Looked after Children' and their peers, this policy outlines a set of guiding principles that will inform best practice.

As such, the governing body and staff at Holte School will fully support working with and supporting 'Looked after Children' by:

- Doing the things we do for all young people – but more so for 'Looked after Children'.
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge, and a relentless focus on high expectations.
- Enabling 'Looked after Children' to engage in and take responsibility for their learning.
- Skilfully linking each 'Looked after Children' to a key person they relate well to.
- Making it a priority to know the 'Looked after Child' well and to build strong relationships.
- Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies.
- Making things happen and seeing things through.
- Swiftly intervening if any 'problems' emerge, such as those linked with behaviour or attendance.
- Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility.
- Actively extending the horizons of each 'Looked after Children' including engagement in after school activities and learning outside of the classroom.
- Closely monitor the academic, social and personal progress of all 'Looked after Children'.
- Planning for future transitions.

5.2 All of these principles should be grounded in an ethos that provides a unified but **low profile** support in school for any 'Looked after Child', so that they are not made to feel different from other children.

5.3 These principles are broadly based on the statutory guidance:

- The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' (February 2018)
- Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities to support looked-after and previously looked-after children's aspirations to achieve in further and higher education (February 2018)

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 Overview**

It is the responsibility of all staff to understand the context affecting the progress of 'Looked after Children', as well as embracing the guiding principles that we hope will support them to achieve their very best. All staff need to understand that 'Looked after Children' may present specific challenges at school, but will also need specific kinds of support, advice and guidance. The Roles and Responsibilities outlined below should support the successful provision for 'Looked after Children' at Holte School.

### **6.2 Governing Body**

In order to provide outstanding support for 'Looked after Children', the governing body will nominate a governor with responsibility for 'Looked after Children' who links with the designated teacher. The governor with responsibility for 'Looked after Children' is Theresa Kraft. The governing body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises children looked after according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked after Children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher for 'Looked after Children'
- Liaise with the headteacher, designated teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of 'Looked after Children' are met
- Receive regular reports, (every term) from the designated teacher which should include: the number of 'Looked after Children' on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan, their attendance, compared to other pupils, their attainment compared to other pupils, the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any), the destinations of pupils who leave the school. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give 'Looked after Children' equal access in respect of: admission to school, the 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 'Looked after Children.'

### **6.3 Headteacher**

In order to provide outstanding support for 'Looked after Children', the Headteacher will:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for 'Looked after Children', whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- The Designated Teacher for 'Looked after Children' is Lee Farmer, Assistant Headteacher Pastoral.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of 'Looked after Children' and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of 'Looked after Children' to all parties involved. Ensure that staff in school receives relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

#### 6.4 Designated Teacher

Government Guidance advises that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen... [who] should be an advocate for 'Looked after Children', assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them." It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The designated teacher for 'Looked after Children' is Lee Farmer, Assistant Headteacher, Pastoral who has received statutory training. The designated teacher will:

- Act as an advocate for 'Looked after Children' (including pre-LAC) and act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of 'Looked after Children.'
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Liaise with the SENCo, where appropriate, to ensure that pupils who are 'Looked after Children' and have special educational needs receive the support they require.
- monitor attendance, academic progress personal and social wellbeing and co-ordinate any support for the 'Looked after Children' that is necessary
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed with the child, the social worker, the carer and any other relevant people, within twenty days of the start of a school placement and at least once every term.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan includes SMART targets that will promote progress and that Pupil Premium Plus funds are used appropriately and effectively.
- Keep Personal Education Plans and other records up to date and reviewed at least once every academic term.
- Track the use of Pupil Premium Plus funding to ensure identified children make outstanding achievement and emotional wellbeing is good.
- Convene an urgent multi professional meeting if a Looked after Child is experiencing difficulties or at risk of exclusion.
- Contribute information to 'Looked after Children' reviews when required.



- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware that 60% of 'Looked after Children' say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential/personal information on a need to know basis.
- Provide regular reports to the Governing Body regarding 'Looked after Children' in the school and relevant policy and practice development.
- To ensure the effective transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care to the Virtual School as requested.
- Will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the latest regulations and practices outlined in good practice and national guidelines documentation
- Ensure looked-after and previously looked-after children are prioritised in the school's over-subscription criteria.
- On admission, records will be requested from the looked-after or previously looked-after children's previous school.
- On admission a meeting will be held with carers/parents/social workers, as appropriate, to complete the baseline information to inform the child's PEP. An appropriate induction will be arranged as part of the PEP.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual students, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student.

The Designated Teacher has a key role in making sure there is a central point of initial contact within the school who can manage the process of how the school engages with others (e.g. social services, virtual school heads), works in a joined up way and minimises the disruption to the child's education.

#### 6.5 Whole School Staff

All staff at Holte School have a responsibility for promoting the academic and personal development of looked-after children. All staff will:

- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of 'Looked after Children'.
- Positively promote the raising of a 'Looked after Child's' self-esteem.
- Ensure any 'Looked after Child' is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the Guidance on 'Looked after Children' and respond appropriately to requests for information to support Personal Education Plans, and review meetings
- Liaise with the designated teachers where a 'Looked after Child' is experiencing difficulties
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation experienced by Looked-after and previously-looked-after children.

## **7. Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures**

7.1 Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of focus and include targets and associated actions to improve performance, progress or educational achievement.

7.2 Areas for consideration for a looked-after child's PEP will include:

- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations);
- Educational Data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages;
- Effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus and evidence of impact;
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any);
- Attendance;
- Behaviour;
- The Looked After Child's views.

7.3 The PEP will be updated and reviewed each term or at the point of any major change and contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan.

7.4 The school currently completes PEPs using the procedures outlined by Virtual Schools. This includes the use of ePEP. Some Virtual Schools also collect attendance data on a weekly basis from the school.

## Appendix One: Useful resources and external organisations

The following resources are relevant with respect to looked after children in education:

- The Who Cares? Trust: <http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk>
- The National Children's Bureau: <http://www.ncb.org.uk>
- The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children (Ofsted report 2012): <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/impact-of-virtual-schools-educational-progress-of-looked-after-children>
- Education Matters in Care: A report by the independent cross-party inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children in England: [http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/Education Matters in Care September 2012.pdf](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/Education%20Matters%20in%20Care%20September%202012.pdf)
- Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework) and reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection>
- Looked after children: good practice in schools (Ofsted report 2008): <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/looked-after-children-good-practice-schools>
- The White Paper, *Care matters: time for change*, June 2007, can be downloaded from; [www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/) The report from the Best Practice in Schools Working Group, led by Professor Dame Pat Collarbone, can also be downloaded from this website.
- Research and statistics relating to looked after children can be found at; [www.ttrb.ac.uk/ELibrarianQuestionDetails.aspx?QuestionId=262](http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/ELibrarianQuestionDetails.aspx?QuestionId=262)
- The Department for Children, Schools and Families 'Find Out More' website for articles and research can be found at; [http://findoutmore.dfes.gov.uk/2006/10/lookedafter\\_chi.html](http://findoutmore.dfes.gov.uk/2006/10/lookedafter_chi.html) and [www.children.gov.uk/cgi-bin/rsgateway/textsearch.pl?charset=utf-8&col=rsgate&la=en&qt=september&st=91&type=next10](http://www.children.gov.uk/cgi-bin/rsgateway/textsearch.pl?charset=utf-8&col=rsgate&la=en&qt=september&st=91&type=next10)
- All Office of the Children's Director for England reports of the views of looked after children can be found on the children's website; [www.rights4me.org](http://www.rights4me.org)
- For publications and guidance see; [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4005321](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4005321)
- Looked After Children Professional Network; [www.youngminds.org.uk/professionals/partnerships/looked-after-children-1](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/professionals/partnerships/looked-after-children-1)
- The role of parents is explored in *Parents, carers and schools* (070018), Ofsted, 2007; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070018](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070018)
- The role of governors is explored in *Supporting looked after learners: a practical guide for school governors* (DfES-1929-2005), DfES, 2005; <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-1929-2005>

