

Willow Tree Primary School – Looked After Children Policy

The term 'looked after' was introduced by the Children's Act 1989. Children become 'looked after' either if they have been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most looked after children will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their natural parents.

Looked-after children will have a care manager who arranges their care plan.

The governing body of Willow Tree 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 underachievement of looked after children, when compared with peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000 and DfEE/DOH Guidance 2000 and the Children Act 2004. It is also drawn up within the requirements of the 2010 Single Equality Act. The Children Act places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to reach their full potential.

The guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- Prioritising education
- Having high expectations
- Inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes
- Early intervention
- Listening to children

Our school has a named governor and a designated teacher to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for each looked after child.

This governing body is committed to ensuring that the designated teacher and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

The named governor and governing body should:

Ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the code of practice on admissions.

Ensure that the school is safeguarding and promoting the education of LAC.

Ensure that all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance.

Ensure that there is a designated teacher.

Link with the designated teacher to receive progress reports and give feedback to the governing body.

Ensure that there is a policy for LAC Review and the implementation of this policy every two years.

Be aware of attendance and exclusions of LAC.

Ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve anonymity and respect the confidentiality of pupils concerned.

Ensure that other school policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of admissions, examinations, educational support and extra-curricular activities.

The **Head Teacher** will:

Be responsible for all systems to support the looked after children.

Be the named point of contact for colleagues in social services and education.

Report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:

- The number of looked after children in the school
- The results of test scores as a discrete group compared with other pupils
- The attendance of looked after children compared to other pupils
- The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils

The **Designated Teacher** will:

Be the central point of contact for outside agencies.

Ensure all staff in the school are kept up to date regarding issues around LAC.

Create a strong communication and effective partnerships with the virtual school, CAMHS, YOS, carer(s)

Know their looked after children and establish a register.

Promote the education and well-being of LAC.

“Champion” the cause for LAC by promoting high expectations and aspirations.

Ensure all LAC have an up to date PEP.

Ensure access to learning support.

Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing of LAC.

The staff will:

As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of looked after children.

Be familiar with the guidance and respond appropriately to requests for information and completion of the PEPs or other documentation required as part of a review meeting.

Liaise with the designated teacher if a child is experiencing difficulty.

The PEP will consider:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses
- Their interests, both in and out of school
- Developmental, educational and pastoral needs
- How future plans may be supported
- Issues arising for the child

The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the guidance from the DfES and DoH and of the Single Equality Act 2010.