ATTENBOROUGH LEARNING TRUST

Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant statutory guidance and Trust policy and procedure.

Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

Introduction

Our school wants all our children to do well, and our staff work together to help every child be successful and happy in school. We know that looked-after children and previously looked-after children may be more vulnerable than others, and this policy outlines how we aim to help them. Many ways of working which benefit children in care will also benefit other children in our school.

1. Aims

- The well-being of looked-after and previously looked-after children is seen as a priority for all staff who work with them.
- An experienced member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children and supports other staff members to do this too.
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.
- The Governing Board Safeguarding Lead takes a strategic overview of looked-after and previously looked-after children and reports this to the full governing board as part of their annual duties.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy takes account of the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children and section 20 and section 20A of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children are registered pupils that are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:

- A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them.
- A special guardianship order.
- An adoption order.

Or they appear to the governing board to have:

- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

Personal Education Plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to help the child reach their full potential.

Virtual School Head (VSH) is the local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school (called the 'Virtual School'). The VSH is also

responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

The VSH keeps in touch with a **Designated Teacher for Looked-after and previously looked-after children** in each school in the local authority.

4. The Designated teacher

Our designated teacher is **Mrs Penny Cooper**
You can contact them by contacting the school office office @sparkenhoe.thealt.org.uk / 0116 2512686. Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the sections below.

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians, to promote good home-school links, to support progress, and to encourage children to engage with their education and in school activities.
- Liaise with VSHs and their teams, for children in our school. This may include seeking expert assessments of a child's needs.
- Support school staff in understanding the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn (such as attachment difficulties; trauma and loss; coping with transition and change; building good relationships with adults and other children; attendance and behaviour).
- Co-ordinate arrangements to support teachers who have a looked-after child in their class, to undergo suitable professional development.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Work closely with the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) and the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure that any concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children

A Personal Education Plan is usually written soon after a child comes into care and then reviewed and a new plan made at intervals across each school year, often through a meeting held once each school term (i.e. three times a year).

- The Designated Teacher has lead responsibility within the school for the development, implementation and tracking of looked-after children's PEPs, working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs. They will make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plan that a looked-after child may have.

- Wherever possible, the foster carers' views and those of the children themselves will be sought and considered alongside those of the school, social work and Virtual School staff, to help set targets at each PEP meeting.

- The designated teacher will ensure that a looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and noting whether agreed provision is being delivered, and what resources may be required to further support the child.
- When a looked-after child is transferring to another school, our school will provide their PEP promptly to their new school's designated teacher and their VSH, along with any additional information that could be helpful in the transition.

6. Pupil Premium Plus Funding for Looked after and previously looked after children

For looked-after children, the designated teacher will:

- Work in conjunction with the virtual school head for advice on how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can be used most effectively to improve their attainment.

For previously looked-after children, the designated teacher will:

- Consider the best use of available funding to benefit the child.

For looked-after and previously looked-after children, the designated teacher will:

- Encourage foster carers, parents or guardians, as appropriate, to be involved in decisions about how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, linking with the aims of the child's PEP. This will be discussed during the PEP meeting.
- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding.

7. Special Educational Needs

The designated teacher will liaise with the school's SENCO to:

- Ensure that, with the help of the VSH's team, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary.
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential emotional, behavioural or mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services.
- Balance any need for specialist provision with the child's need to build good relationships with a small group of trusted adults, so that they are not overwhelmed.
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children by the class teacher and carers, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs.

8. Relationships beyond the school

Our school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability and effectiveness of education for looked-after children and previously looked-after children. Alongside the school's Senior Management Team, the designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, foster carers, kinship carers, and adoptive parents and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom.
- Make sure that class teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips.
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action.
- Talk to relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority could do to minimise disruption.
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child and their carers, aiming to avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians and seek advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when there is a change in legislation, by the Trust. Our school will make sure that the name and contact details for the Designated Teacher are kept up-to-date on this policy document, and that the policy is available on the school website.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Exclusions
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical needs