



The  
Westminster  
School



# Looked After Children Policy 2017-2018

*Safe Happy and Learning Together*  
*Building foundations and providing*  
*opportunities to create confident,*  
*aspirational and independent members*  
*of our community.*

Approved by Governing Body on: 21/06/18

Signed by Chair of Governors:

*Ken Oho*

Head Teacher:

C A Hill BEd NPQH

Lead Personnel:

J Turner

Date of Review:

21/06/19

## **Purpose**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children.

## **Rationale**

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Looked After Children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement, disengagement and mental health difficulties when compared to their peers. This can have implication in later life including limited economic success, challenges with well-being or even lower life expectancy.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- 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 (section 21).

The term '**in care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act - they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be '**Looked After Children**' (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

## **Introduction**

The Westminster School aims to promote the Achievement and Welfare of Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Mrs Joanne Turner

The Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mr Kenneth Ellis

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

This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

We aim to contribute towards promoting the achievement and wellbeing of pupils through our schools ‘Safe, Happy and Learning Together’ vision.

As corporate parents this school believes in the principles of good parenting by:

- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- celebrating success
- developing emotional resilience
- promoting independence

## **Aims**

The aims of the school in relation to LAC pupils are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for Looked After Children as for all children
- ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which prepares them for life after Westminster

- provide a personalized curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that Looked After pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that Looked After pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

The school is also responsible for monitoring children who are previously looked after.

A previously looked-after child is one who has **left care** through one of the following routes:

- Subject to an Adoption Order
- Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Child Arrangements Order (specific to residency-living with)

The parent or guardian should provide documentation of the Adoption Certificate or the Special Guardianship Order/ Child Arrangements Order documentation provided by the court.

Declarations are voluntary and confidentiality should be respected if parents and carers do not wish to declare their status.

### **Admissions**

The Governing Body endorses the Sandwell Council Policy for the admission of Looked After Children.

Due to care placement changes, Looked After Children may enter school mid-year. The Westminster School believes that it is vital that we give each Looked After Child a positive welcome and robust transition programme to help them settle and be part of our school community.

### **Allocation of Resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate and personalized provision for LAC through the use of LAC Pupil Premium funding.

We will work in partnership with Sandwell Virtual School for Looked After Children to ensure that Looked After Children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

### **Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children**

The social worker for the Looked After Children initiates a Personal Education Plan - PEP - within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the child or young person is actively involved.

This school assesses each Looked After pupil's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP Review meetings and to provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, Sandwell Virtual School, parents, carers and any other agencies.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher knows all the Looked After Children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Sandwell Virtual School specialist staff, Independent Reviewing Officer and social worker.

The status of Looked After Children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

### **Staff Development**

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with LAC within the school and disseminate information.

### **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

We believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

### **Links with external agencies/organisations**

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- Social worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Sandwell Virtual School for Looked After Children
- Educational psychologists

- Local Authority SEN services
- Medical professionals
- Community Childrens nurses
- CAMHS
- Attendance and Prosecution Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- External Learning Providers

### **LAC Policy Review**

We undertake a thorough review of the Looked After Children Policy every year.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **The Designated Teacher will:**

- be an advocate for Looked After Children within school.
- champion the education of previously looked after children.
- be proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise progress of Looked After Children and ensure positive well-being.
- work in partnership with Sandwell Virtual School providing termly progress data on the progress of Looked After Children.
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Looked After Children on both the Looked After Children and the rest of the school community.
- know all the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- attend relevant training about Looked After Children and disseminate information and good practice to other staff.
- Influence school policy and practice for Looked After Children.
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice from Sandwell Virtual School where necessary.
- ensure that Looked After Children receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year and offer a personalized transition.
- ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan.
- arrange and contribute to PEP Review meetings.
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at termly intervals.

- monitor the targets set out in the PEP.
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil.
- act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children.
- ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events.
- actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for Looked After Children.
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, and records where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement.
- report to the Governing body on Looked After Children in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development.
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events.
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
  - the number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan - PEP.
  - their attendance compared to other pupils.
  - their attainment compared to other pupils.
  - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
  - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate - such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children.
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.

**All school staff will:**

- positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self esteem.
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress.
- ensure any Looked After Children are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- follow school procedures.
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.

- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties.
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times through the SENCo.

**The Governing Body will:**

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children.
- designate a member of staff (the designated teacher) to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including those aged 16-18, who are registered pupils at the school.
- Liaise with the headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met.
- nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher.
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
  - admission to school
  - out of school learning and extra curricular activities
  - additional educational support
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children.
- In the event of an exclusion, ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meeting of the Looked After Child.

**Sandwell Local Authority will:**

- Provide a Virtual Headteacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After Children.
- Provide a specialist team to provide an advice service for Looked After Children as part of Sandwell Virtual School.
- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Looked After Children.
- ensure that the education for this group of pupils is as good as that provided for every other pupil.
- ensure that Looked After Children receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible.

- ensure that every Looked After Children has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Sunderland from another authority.
- make sure that each Looked After Children has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training.
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate.
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible.
- be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special educational needs of Looked After Children and work collaboratively with schools, other services and agencies to meet those needs.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including:**

- Engagement and Well-being policy
- SEN information report
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy