

Shefford Lower School

Looked After Children (LAC) Policy



Introduction

Shefford Lower School and Governors are committed to providing quality education for all pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children 2015, place duty on us to work together to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children at our school.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out the role of Shefford Lower School in supporting and enhancing the educational experiences of the looked after children on its roll by having the highest expectations and promoting educational inclusion, in order to increase life chances for this vulnerable group.

The school recognises that nationally there is considerable educational under achievement 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.

Terminology

Looked After Child: A 'looked after child' (LAC) is Central Bedfordshire's term for any child or young person taken into care by the local authority ('in public care'), being accommodated by the local authority or remanded/detained. The child's placement may include living with a relative, emergency care and short or long term formal foster placement.

Child Looked After: Some of our neighbouring authorities refer to Looked After Children as being a 'child looked after' (CLA) and as a school we work closely with many different authorities to support children and at times the terms Looked After Children and Child Looked After are used interchangeably.

Accommodation (Section 20): This comes under Section 20 of the Children Act and is a voluntary arrangement with parents as they may be ill, missing, and unable to cope for a period of time. The parents retain parental responsibility.

In Care: A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order (Section 31(1) Children Act) or interim care order (section 38, Children Act) which it will issue if it believes a child is suffering or is

likely to suffer significant harm. A Care Order gives additional parental responsibility to the local authority which it shares with the birth parents.

Remanded/detained into care: This relates to children who are the subject of emergency orders. Police may use their powers of protection and courts may remand into care following criminal charges.

Roles and Responsibilities

The local authority and the school are the 'corporate parents' of the child as well as other involved professionals and all have a duty to work together to ensure that the child/young person is fully supported during their period of compulsory education and beyond this if they choose to continue in education after the age of eighteen.

Looked After Children are recognised to be a very vulnerable group in terms of education and future life chances. Looked After Children may have **some** or **all** of the following issues:

- Attachment difficulties
- 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
- Be withdrawn

The Governing Body of Shefford Lower School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and, as part of its Corporate Parenting role, will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:

- A named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (This must be a qualified teacher as described in the Statutory Instruments 2009, No 1538)
- A named Designated Governor
- Personal Education Plans (PEP) for all Looked After Children up to the end of Year 11 and beyond this if the young person continues in education and chooses to continue the PEP
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and the issues that affect LAC
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group
- Close working links with the local authority and all other authorities involved and professionals, including the Virtual School Head teacher (or equivalent) for LAC

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher is currently Ms Trina Bambridge who will:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children within the school
- Ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for any new Looked After Children and their carer
- Ensure that a PEP is completed as soon as possible, working jointly with the child and carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings
- Ensure that each child in public care has an identified member of staff who they can talk to (this will usually be the child's class teacher, but could be the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, The Child and Family Support Worker, Headteacher)
- Co-ordinate support for the child in school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary
- Ensure school staff receive relevant information and training to ensure progress and provide feedback for review meetings
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share very personal information on a need to know basis
- Provide information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible
- Ensure the child and carer receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events
- Encourage Looked After Children to participate in extracurricular activities and out of hours learning where feasible, ensuring they are provided with any entitlements e.g. free music lessons where appropriate.
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school during any transfer periods
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties or is in danger of exclusion
- Ensure wherever possible that exclusion is a last resort and where absolutely necessary is as short a period as possible seeking partnership arrangements with other schools for provision elsewhere if at all possible.
- Track the progress of Looked After Children within the school to ensure they remain "on track" and identify and ensure appropriate use of Pupil Premium to support, and apply for Pupil Premium Plus support where appropriate.

- Ensure that returns of information on Looked After Children are completed as requested by the local authority.

Roles and Responsibilities of all staff

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with and respond to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other review meetings
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's request for information on educational attainment and needs as appropriate
- As with all children, ensure that no Looked After child is stigmatised in any way
- Provide a supportive climate to ensure that a Looked After child can achieve stability within the school setting
- Set high aspirations for the education and personal achievement of all Looked After children
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After children and refer to the person responsible for 'more able' children as appropriate

Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- Be aware of whether the school has any Looked After Children on roll and how many in each year group
- Ensure there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- Liaise with the Head teacher to ensure the Designated Teacher is able to carry out their responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children
- Support the Head teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met
- Nominate a Governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (any reports must not include the names of Looked After Children)
- Review the effectiveness of this policy as 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 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. Any reports to the Governing Body in relation to Looked After Children will not include names of children.

Training

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will undertake regular training as provided by the local authority.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the LAC Co-ordinator and the Governing Body. It will be reviewed every 2 years.

Date of review	31/10/2017	
LAC Link Governor	Craig Smith and Emma Atkins	
LAC Co-ordinator	Trina Bambridge	
Head teacher	Tracey Callender	
Date of next review	October 2019	