

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



RHODES AVENUE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Date: Summer 2023

**Last reviewed
on:** Autumn 2019

**Next review
due by:**



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

Summer 2023

The governing body of Rhodes Avenue Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body is committed to implementing the principles and practice for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) as outlined in the following legislation:

'Promoting the Education of LAC or PLAC' (February 2018);

'The Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC' (February 2018);

'Promoting the health and Well-being of LAC and PLAC' (March 2015 and Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004.

Definitions

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living:

- with foster parents;
- in a residential unit;
- with family members;
- with their parents.

These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

The *Children's Act* (1989) states that the term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders, which will be issued if there are reasons to suspect that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A 'Care Order' generally gives parental responsibility to the Local Authority or shares this with parents. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'Accommodated' (provision for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) by the local authority because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. In this case, the parents retain parental responsibility. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after children' (LAC) or 'children in care' or 'children looked after' (CLA) by the local authority.

This policy incorporates requirements set out in section 52 of the *Children's Act* (2004) which places a duty on schools to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to achieve and reach their full potential. This policy recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and follows six key principles:

- prioritising education;
- having high expectations;
- challenging and changing attitudes to LAC and PLAC;
- achieving continuity and stability;
- early intervention;
- listening to pupils.

Context

Many children who are in care have been subjected to a variety of challenges and looked after children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, looked after children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers and their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by previous experiences and compounded by any instability in their personal circumstances. For example, looked after children may have difficulties with attendance, transport to school, obtaining parental consent for activities, securing funding for extra-curricular activities, completing homework activities or owning basic school equipment.

Many looked after children leave education with no formal qualifications and fail to go on to further education compared with the general population. Supporting, inspiring and helping looked after children to achieve academic success and provide a better future is a key priority of the school. Rhodes Avenue School aspires for looked after children to stay safe, achieve, be healthy and enjoy school in a supportive environment.

Aims

The school aims to:

- provide a secure environment where they feel safe and can be themselves;
- provide a source of continuity and 'normality';
- be a place where they form, maintain and develop friendships;
- give them every opportunity to achieve their potential and enjoy learning;
- to have high expectations for their development;

Practice

In implementing this policy, the school has nominated a Designated Lead (Ms Emel Ali) who will advocate and co-ordinate support for looked after children. The school has also nominated a school governor (Ms Lucy Freestone) to ensure that the needs of looked after children are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Leader. The school will also make time available and ensure that a training programme is available for leaders and teaching staff involved with looked after children.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head teacher will:

- appoint a Designated Leader;
- monitor and report on the admission, progress, attendance and exclusions and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations;
- report to the governors on the following:
 - number of looked after children in school;
 - their assessments as a discreet group compared with other pupils;
 - their attendance as a discreet group compared to other pupils;
 - number of fixed term/permanent exclusions;
 - any additional interventions that support progress;
 - the impact of Pupil Premium funding;
 - pupil destinations after leaving school.
- ensure that staff receive training and are aware of their responsibilities.

The Designated Leader will:

- welcome and induct child and their carer into school;
- ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) will contain the child's:
 - strengths and areas for improvement;
 - interests (in and out of school);
 - developmental/educational/pastoral needs;
 - future plans and how they can be supported and is completed with the child, social worker, carer and other outside professionals and supports their Care Plan;
- serve as the named contact for colleagues and professionals in social services and education;
- ensure that carer(s) receive notification of school meetings, consultation evenings and other school events and that communication remains regular and positive;
- ensure the school's contribution to the development of the PEP includes realistic targets and be compatible with the child's Care Plan or EHCP;
- maintain records that will include:
 - status (care or accommodated);
 - type of placement (foster/respite/residential)
 - name of social worker, area, office, telephone and email address;
 - daily contact numbers of parent/carers/key worker in children's home;
 - safeguarding information if relevant;
 - assessment data;
 - attendance record;
 - behaviour/exclusion profile.
- ensure all necessary information is passed to other staff and professionals as required;
- establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies;
- ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a 'need to know' basis;
- promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage looked after children to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning;
- act as advisor to staff and governors, raising awareness of their needs
- set up meetings with relevant professionals and agencies particularly if the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion;
- ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals and agencies if pupils leave school;
- ensure that each looked after child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to;
- ensure that looked after children and their peers are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school;
- support the transition to secondary school;
- attend training and keep informed of the latest developments.

The Governing body of Rhodes Avenue will:

- ensure that admission criteria prioritises looked after children, according to the
- Code of Practice on Admissions;
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for looked after children;
- ensure that there is a named Designated Leader for looked after children;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Leader, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported;
- in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned;
- review the effective implementation of this policy;

- ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school;
 - the National Curriculum and public examinations;
 - additional educational support where this is needed.

Staff will:

- as with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of looked after children;
- maintain looked after children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively;
- be familiar with the guidance on looked after children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other
- documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- liaise with the Designated Leader where a looked after child is experiencing difficulty.

Admissions

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker as appropriate, but always involving someone with parental responsibility. All relevant issues – academic, pastoral, social – will be discussed and this will provide information for the PEP and ensure that communication systems are established early.

At the first PEP meeting, the school will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips and extra- curricular activities and be the first point of contact.

The Haringey Virtual School

The Haringey Virtual School is an additional resource which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of all children who are in care. It is involved in, or promotes nationally and locally, various initiatives to support the educational achievement of children in care.

The Virtual school is not a teaching tool or environment. It does not replace the school or educational provision of children in care. All children, who are in the care of Haringey and of statutory school age and in education post 16, including university, are part of Haringey's Virtual School.

The Virtual School Team is a small multi-disciplinary team working to raise the educational attainment and attendance of children. It works in close collaboration with colleagues across the authority. It tracks educational progress, while supporting and monitoring work with children in care. It works to help children achieve their full potential and offers support and advice to those who care and work with them.

Links with other policies and documents

- Behaviour for Learning
- Home School Agreement
- Exclusion of Pupils
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Safeguarding
- Pupil Premium

Equalities

Rhodes Avenue will ensure that it complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the abovementioned Act.

Procedures for policy monitoring and dissemination

This policy will be reviewed according to the Governing Body's schedule of policies. All members of staff and Governors will receive a copy of this policy. A copy will be available to download from the school's website and a hard copy will be available from the school office.

Confidentiality

Information on Looked After Children and Previously 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 school 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.

Persons Responsible

Head teacher
Deputy Head
Health and Safety Committee
Designated Safeguarding Lead