



St Edward's Church of England  
Primary School

# **Looked After Children Policy**

**May 2011**



# St. Edward's Church of England Primary School

## POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION AND WELFARE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

### 1.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*"We want Children in Care to feel loved and cared for, able to achieve their full potential, and given the best chances in life" - Children and Young Person's Plan 2008 – 2011*

At St Edward's C. of E. Primary School we believe that all Looked after Children (LAC) should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all other Havering children. We, as a community, aim to be champions for Looked after Children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development.

### 1.1 Who are our Children in Care?

The child or young person will either 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 parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

### 1.2 In supporting Looked after Children we will:

- create a whole school ethos in which *all staff* understand their role and accept their responsibility as a Corporate Parent;
- provide a *safe and secure environment*, which values learning and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
- strive to bring the educational attainment of Looked after Children nearer to those of their peers;
- make sure that the child or young person has access to education appropriate to their age and ability which includes a broad and balanced curriculum;
- identify our schools' role to promote and support the education and learning of our Looked after Children always asking 'Would this be good enough for my child?';
- have a *Designated Teacher (DT)* for Looked After Children *who will act as their advocate* and coordinate support for them, liaise with carers, parents (as appropriate), social workers and school staff on a wide variety of educational, emotional and care issues;
- support Every Child Matters five outcomes:
  - Be Healthy - help learners adopt healthier lifestyles, build self-esteem, eat/drink well;

- Stay Safe - safe from bullying, harassment and other dangers;
- Enjoy & Achieve - enable learners to make good progress in their work and personal development & enjoy learning;
- Make a Positive Contribution - understanding rights and responsibilities, are listened to and participate in the life of the community;
- Achieve Economic Well Being - gaining the skills and knowledge needed for future employment.

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Looked after Children by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities, and by establishing and maintaining appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the school and with other agencies.

### **1.3 In pursuit of this Policy we will:**

- nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate, actively engage in coordinating support within the school/staff in promoting the best opportunities for these children or young people;
- nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Looked after Children within the school community are taken into account at a school leadership level and to support the Designated Teacher in the execution of their duties;
- support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training provided by the Local Authority and other agencies on Looked After Children.

## **2.0 DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

(see Statutory Regulations from Sept 2009)

The name of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care/Looked after Children is **Allison Rees**

### **2.1 The Designated Teacher needs to:**

- be a qualified teacher (usually experienced) or the headteacher;
- be a person who has been working in the school or setting for at least six months
- maintain a register of all Looked after Children including those within the Local Authority and those placed outside Havering;
- maintain up-to-date records of individual LAC including:
  - status i.e. care order or accommodated;
  - type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential, adoptive;
  - name of social worker and contact details;
  - ensure statutory documentation is kept up-to-date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability through the Personal Education Plan (PEP);

- daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns, e.g. name of child, name of parent or carer or key worker in the children's home;
- share Child Protection / Disability information (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information);
- relevant health information;
- baseline information and all test results;
- named Officers in the local authority with regard to exclusion, attendance and transition issues such as the Virtual School head teacher;
- the child's entitlement to decide who attends their Looked after Children Statutory Reviews (6 monthly). If the school does not attend it must submit a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their personal Education Plan;
- participate in appropriate DT training and joint agency training where available;
- if there are safeguarding concerns for a Looked after child, contact and advice should be sought from Education Safeguarding Team – Michelle White 01708 433842.

### **3.0 GOVERNORS**

The names of the Designated Governors for Looked after Children are **Jane Harder** and **Lynne Jackman**.

#### **3.1 What every Designated Governor for LAC needs to know:**

- the current number of LAC on school roll;
- number of LAC with up-to-date PEPs;
- overall attainment of LAC in the school and their performance compared to peers;
- number of LAC with SEN and Statements;
- authorised and unauthorised absence levels of LAC;
- number of LAC who have been excluded in previous six months with reasons for exclusions;
- how LA supports educational achievement of LAC.

#### **3.2 The Governing Body will:**

- ensure the DT has opportunity to attend training and that school staff and governors are aware of the DCSF Statutory Guidance;
- have knowledge of the Duty on Local Authorities to promote the Educational Achievement of Children in Care, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004;
- make certain that there is a dedicated governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its Looked After Children as part of a larger group of vulnerable children;
- take a proactive approach in coordinating with, and supporting, the relevant local authority with regard to the education of Looked after Children attending the school;
- ensure that the Designated teacher and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the head teacher.

#### 4.0 WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

- The voice of the Looked After Child will be listened to and acted upon having access to counselling if required;
- we will celebrate the achievements of Looked after Children;
- our staff will have high expectations of the child, encouraging achievement and ambition;
- our Looked after Children will have a special, trusted adult in school that is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required;
- for our young Looked after Children there will be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect them from school;
- training will be provided so that all our staff understand the needs of Looked After Children in order that they actively promote the child's best interest. and to ensure that they are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the child's ability to engage in the learning process including:
  - feelings of loss;
  - rejection;
  - anger;
  - isolation;
  - confusion;
  - low self-esteem.
- adults in our school will be sensitive to the child's wishes over what is known and by whom, regarding their case status;
- we will ensure that effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established;
- there will be appropriate information sharing about individual Looked after Children keeping staff up to date and informed;
- our designated teacher will ensure that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within our school and between school, carers, parents (as appropriate), social workers and outside agencies. They will also ensure that high educational expectations are maintained;
- we will actively support and encourage the engagement of Looked After Children in out of school hours learning;
- our school will work in partnership with carers, agencies and parents (where appropriate);
- we will support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance;
- our staff will help Looked after Children to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis;
- our staff will be aware that being or becoming 'looked after' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given;
- we will make certain that our staff are aware of possible unresolved feelings the child may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.

## **5.0 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/GIFTED AND TALENTED**

### **(see SEN & Gifted and talented policies):**

- Any special educational needs will be quickly identified and appropriate provision will be made;
- we will have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early intervention to improve this. Contact must be made with the Looked after Children Team as soon as concerns are raised;
- if a child has a statement of special need, we will ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews (dates can be obtained from the social worker).

## **6.0 ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFERS**

We will:

- prioritise Looked after Children within our own admissions procedures and admit children/students as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Looked After Children;
- ensure a warm welcome to our school by providing appropriate induction for all Looked after Children so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate;
- make sure that on admission or transfer, all relevant information is obtained from the outset;
- forward appropriate documentation, in a timely manner, to any receiving school at the point of transition where the receiving school is made known;
- make every effort to provide continuity of schooling, learning and educational experience.

## **7.0 ATTENDANCE (see School Attendance Policy)**

We will:

- ensure that attendance data is readily available for monitoring through Welfare Call;
- establish a first day of absence procedure where attendance is identified as a problem;
- when a child is absent for three consecutive days or more, the social worker needs to be informed via email or phone call;
- inform the carer, Pupil Services, social worker, parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance and/or punctuality;
- we will acknowledge attendance in any educational meetings, celebrate success and set realistic targets if it is a concern including regular and punctual attendance of lessons during the school day.

## **8.0 EXCLUSION (see Behaviour Policy):**

We will:

- identify any Child in Care who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Looked after Children Team, Social Worker, Virtual School Headteacher and relevant professionals

to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school;

- ensure in the case of a fixed period (or permanent) exclusion that the carer (or person holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have:
  - been spoken to;
  - within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and reason/s for the exclusion;
  - date of return;
  - outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body, where appropriate;
  - detail arrangements made to enable the excluded child/young person to continue his/her education.
- make sure, in the event of any exclusion, to contact the Looked after Children Team and the virtual School Head teacher with details of exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that appropriate responses can be made. The Havering contact is [lynda.wilks@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:lynda.wilks@haverling.gov.uk) or phone 01708 431855;
- our school will follow DCSF Guidance 'Improving Behaviour and Attendance; Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units' – September 2008.

## **9.0 MULTI-AGENCY LIAISON**

- We will support the child/young person to engage fully in planning and decision making;
- the designated teacher will liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues including homework, kit and equipment required and any trips to be attended. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared;
- there will be a well planned and coordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs where, for example, potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented;
- there will be a clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child/young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved;
- our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals and especially with the child;
- we will be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the parents;
- our designated teacher will ensure that requests from the Local Authority for statistical or other information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations;
- we will encourage each of our Looked after Children to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning.

## **10.0 PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEPS)**

We will:

- hold a PEP meeting in time for every statutory care review that involves the social worker, foster carer, the child and parent if appropriate. Additional attendees may include, for example, Connexions, Educational Psychologist, EWO, Virtual School Headteacher, etc. We will seek the views of the child/young person as to appropriate attendees in line with the statutory guidance;
- have a PEP for each LAC which includes appropriate targets. This will be compatible with the timing of the child's Care Plan. Other school documents e.g. IPP, Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme will be fed into and form part of the PEP;
- contribute to the process whereby all Looked after Children have a high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place within 20 days of starting school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child;
- make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Looked after Children have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set;
- make or support applications for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) e.g. those who are at risk of underachieving academically or for extra curricular activities; through discussions at PEP meetings;
- ensure that a date is agreed and set for the next PEP meeting and that an electronic copy of the PEP is sent to the Virtual school head teacher for Havering within five days of completion.

## **11.0 REFERENCES AND DOCUMENTS**

- DfES, Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors (2006);
- Ofsted, raising Achievement of Children in Public Care (2005);
- DfES, Care Matter: Time for Change (2007);
- DCSF, The Children's Plan: building brighter futures (2007);
- Looked After Children – Good practice in Schools (2008);
- DCSF, The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for school Governing Bodies (2009);
- Ofsted, The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2008/09: Improving outcomes for Looked After Children (2009);
- DCSF, Improving Attainment of Looked After Children in Primary Schools: Guidance for Schools (2009);
- DCSF, Improving Attainment of Looked After Children in Secondary Schools: Guidance for Schools (2009).

**The Headteacher and the Designated Teacher will be responsible for briefing all staff on the regulations and practice outlined and referred to in this policy.**

## **12.0 REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed in 2014.