



Policy for Looked After Children

Policy Lead:	Head Teacher
Date of last review:	June 2021
Date of next review:	September 2023

Definition

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

Sparkwell Primary School recognises that Looked After Children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Many of these points are also relevant to children who are no longer looked after but have been adopted or returned to the birth parents.

Sparkwell Primary School's commitment to Looked After children

Nationally, Looked After Children (LAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 75% of Looked After children leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

We recognise that Looked After children can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and we are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that Looked After children may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as possible stigma about their circumstances.

Sparkwell Primary School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of Looked After Children in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children. This is currently the headteacher.

- All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require
- To ensure that additional funding received is monitored and spent for the benefit of the child(ren)

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEADTEACHER

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave. This named teacher is currently the headteacher.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOARD of TRUSTEES

- Ensure that all Trustees are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children: The Education (Admission of Looked After Children)(England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.

4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen...[who] should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. At Sparkwell it is currently the headteacher.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child’s social worker
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child’s own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a ‘need to know’ basis.
- Encourage Looked After Children to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.

- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's anti-bullying policy.

F. McLoughlin

July 2021