



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

This policy is applicable to all pupils including those in the EYFS

Kirkstone House School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

Designated Teacher for LAC: Mrs E. Harnden

The school 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 8 and section 99 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated guidance on the education of LAC in The Children's Act 1989.

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

See Appendix 2 - Roles & Responsibilities

Who are Looked After Children?

Under the Children's 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 their 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.

Admissions

The School principals believe that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Proprietors will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC pupils.

Allocation of resources

The Proprietors will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.



Monitoring the progress of LAC

The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

See Appendix 3 - school's guidance on PEP forms

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the LAC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required. LAC are identified by a white sticker on the pupil's file.

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 develop awareness of issues associated with LAC. The school will provide INSET for staff related to specific needs of pupils including those LAC.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working. These are attended by the designated LAC co-ordinator and the Headmistress.



Links with external agencies/organizations

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

- LAC teams
- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical Officers
- School Nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service
- School Age Parents' Officer.

LAC policy review and evaluation

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Development Plan

Roles & Responsibilities

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children – LAC - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Emotional difficulties
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This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- under achievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people. The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect.



The Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by LAC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for LAC within school
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the school community
- know who are all the LAC 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 LAC
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate.
- ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care (see guidance on PEPs) and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC 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 the proprietors on issues relevant to LAC



- 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 LAC
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement
- contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- report to the Headmistress on LAC in the school and inform her of relevant policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- prepare reports for the Headmistress and Proprietors to include:
 - the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
 - their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - their attainment (including GCSEs) compared to other pupils.
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend meetings with the Headmistress as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC.
- arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to school
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

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



- give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

Good practice suggests that the Proprietors will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- liaise with the Headmistress, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of school learning and extracurricular activities
 - work experience and careers guidance.
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC.
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC.

The Headmistress will:

- lead the drive to improve educational and standards for LAC
- ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other pupil in the school
- make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
- that the Designated Teacher for LAC receives appropriate information, support and training
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer
- identify a designated member of staff who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC



- be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs.

PEP Guidance

A) Initiating PEPs on Child's entry to care

- You will receive PEP with the first two pages completed. **(Personal Education Plan – Details p1&2)**
- Complete the education sections of the PEP **(PEP-Cumulative Record p3&4 and PEP-Plan p5&6)** in consultation with the social worker/carer/parents/child as appropriate.
- Discuss plan with child/young person. Encourage and record their comments in box on **p6**.
- **Keep original completed PEP in child's school file and use as a working document.**
- Take a photocopy of completed PEP and send to the Reviewing Team in the envelope provided within 20 school working days. The team will then distribute the PEP to all relevant people.

B) For Statutory Care Plan Review meetings

- It is a statutory requirement that PEPs are reviewed every six months.
- Before the Statutory Care Plan review, update the PEP by:
 - Recording any additions to the **Cumulative Record p 3 & 4**
 - Reviewing targets and actions from last PEP meeting (these will either be on the **PEP- Plan p 5 & 6** or **PEP-Plan/Review p 7 & 8** form)
 - Completing a new **PEP- Plan/Review p 7 & 8**. Be sure to record any changes here as well as setting new targets and record any comments from child/young person on **p8**.
- Take copy of the PEP (and any attached information) to meeting or, if not attending, send it to the Reviewing Team.
- Put a copy of the **PEP- Plan/Review** form (and any updated information) with the original PEP in the child/young person's school file.



Also consider:

- If the child/young person has Special Educational Needs, you may wish to hold the PEP and IEP reviews together to minimise paperwork and time.
- If child/young person moves school forward the completed PEP, including the review documents, along with the child's school file in the normal way to the receiving school.
- For fuller explanations please refer to the DfES "Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care".

Signed:

Cosmin Hares.

(Headteacher)

Policy Review Date: September 2019