



## **Brookfields School Policy Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after**

School is a prime place where children in care meet other children, make friendships, and can join in and be appreciated. Looked after children often report that school is a place of consistency and continuity for them, providing routine in what can be otherwise very turbulent lives. School staff will need to be aware of children's emotional vulnerability while at the same time working to keep them firmly focused on their educational progress.

Looked after children have a right to expect the outcomes we want for every child – that they should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. To achieve these five outcomes, schools should fulfil their statutory duty to ensure that every child in care achieves the highest educational standards he or she possibly can. As a school, we will strongly endeavour to support all looked after children within our school, regardless of which Local Authority they are in care with, to maximise their full potential.

Brookfields School believes that by working with Halton or other local authorities who are acting as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of looked after children.

### **As a school, we aim:**

- To provide a safe and secure environment, that values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To narrow the gap in attainment between our looked after children and their peers.
- To adhere to the premise of the question, '**Would this be good enough for my child?**' in our aspirations for looked after children and for those children previously looked-after, and in all that we do to support them.
- To provide a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of all Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after.
- To ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for reviewing and monitoring the progress of Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after.
- To implement the principles and practice as outlined in the following legislation:
  1. The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children 02/18  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>
  2. Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools 10/19  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-effective-use-and-accountability>
  3. Promoting the Education of Looked After Children 02/18  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>
  4. Section 52, Children Act 2004 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/52>
  5. Children's Act 1989 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

### **Looked After Children and those children previously looked-after.**

Looked After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues: this makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

- 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.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private.

**In pursuit of addressing these and providing maximum support the school through this policy will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:**

- Designate a nominated teacher for looked after children and for those children previously looked-after, who will undertake all the statutory responsibilities of that role

**The designated teacher will:**

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after
- Be a central point of contact
- Maintain a register of all looked after children, including those from other local authorities. This will include a record of:
  1. Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
  2. Type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential.
  3. Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
  4. Daily contact and telephone numbers where appropriate e.g. name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
  5. Share, when appropriate, Child Protection/disability information.
  6. Baseline information, ongoing academic progress and all test results.
  7. Comparative peer group academic data.
  8. Details of any additional support being received.
  9. Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.
- Ensure that there is an up to date and effective Personal Education Plan for each child which includes appropriate and challenging educational targets ensuring academic progression. The relevant local authority format should be used. This must be compatible with the child's care plan and form part of any other school plan, e.g. Education, Health and Care Plan, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme. Within the PEP it should be evident how the Pupil Premium Plus funding is being spent and the impact of this additional funding on the child and their outcomes.
- Ensure that the educational achievement is fully promoted by making a positive difference in ensuring that their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
- Ensure that she attends care planning meetings on each child and/or always prepares a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their education for these meetings.
- Ensure that she prepares a written report for the statutory looked after children's reviews
- The whole school staff group will ensure that looked after children are not discriminated against in terms of attendance, truancy and exclusions. In addition, the Designated Teacher will ensure that the appropriate senior managers are made aware of any mitigating circumstances that need to be considered before considering a sanction for the child/young person.

- Ensure that should a looked after child be identified as at risk of exclusion, contact is made with Sharon Williams; Virtual School Head for Children in Care (0151 5117391) and David Purcell; Education Welfare Officer (0151 5117357) immediately in an effort to avoid this from happening and to discuss alternatives
- Coordinate support for the child in school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary. This includes acting as a point of contact for staff and source of advice
- Prioritise looked after children and for those children previously looked-after for access to any appropriate additional in-school and external support services available. This will include amongst others priority access to Education Psychology Service, SEN Service, CAMHS Tier 2, Education Welfare Service, additional tutoring, and mentor support.
- Ensure that on admission or transfer, all relevant information is obtained at the outset and that when new to the school a smooth and welcome induction is in place for the child and carer.
- Ensure that systems are in place, to keep staff up to date and informed about looked after children and for those children previously looked-after within the school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis.
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Encourage Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA
- Ensure that looked after children and those children previously looked-after are listened to and have access to support and counselling in school. If appropriate that the child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (not necessarily the designated teacher but someone that the child knows well)
- Ensure that as the designated teacher, they participate in appropriate training provided and attend Designated Teacher network meetings
- Ensure that they pass on information to the Academy Council at least termly on the performance of their looked after children and those children previously looked-after.

**Roles and Responsibilities of all staff:**

- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;

- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after.
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked after Children and those children previously looked-after.
- Build and maintain strong and effective links between home and school

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Academy Council:**

The Academy Council of this school will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after and ensure compliance with the Statutory Regulations and Guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and/or those children previously looked-after and how many (no names);
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and for children previously looked-after;
- Liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after;
- Support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after are met;
- Nominate an Academy Councillor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the Academy Council. (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons);
- Ensure that Academy Councillors attend the local authority's training on the education of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after. ;
- Work in partnership with parents and agencies;
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance;
- Celebrate the achievements of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after ;
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

### **Confidentiality:**

- Information on looked after children and for those children previously looked-after 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.

### **Training:**

The Head Teacher or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. This policy will be reviewed annually.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The designated teacher will ensure that the Academy Councillors have access to and consider termly information on the progress and educational needs of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after. This should be used as a baseline for comparing the school's own results looked after children / previously looked after, and include, where age appropriate: SATS results, attendance figures, exclusion issues, changes in home placements, PEP completion dates, reviews and interventions to raise achievement. The Academy Council will monitor and evaluate the progress made by individuals and all the children using the same criteria used for other children in the peer group.
- The report will also include intervention strategies such as study support, learning mentor support, home contracts, Pastoral Support Plans, referrals to the Education Support Service for looked after children, counselling support, etc. and information about non-academic progress in extra curricular activities.
- The report will also include training undertaken by the designated teacher, work with LA Virtual School Heads or their equivalents, and multi-agency working.
- The Academy Council will ensure, in discussion with the Headteacher, that all school policies consider the needs of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after. These policies, for example, exclusion/admission, access to school support systems, will also highlight how the school supports/responds to the needs of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after, compared to their peers.

Completed: January 2016

Updated: January 2020

Review: January 2022 (or when new legislation becomes available).