

Children who are Looked After Policy



A community inspiring lifelong learning.

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Signed:	Alex Bone and Keith Spence
Position:	Chair of Curriculum Committee and Chair of Governors
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CHILDREN who are LOOKED AFTER POLICY

Policy for the education of children who are looked after or previously looked after.

Context and Principles

Nationally, Children Looked After significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We acknowledge that schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Children who are Looked After are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make positive contributions to society and achieve economic well-being.

There are approximately 500 children in care in Buckinghamshire and about 350 of these are of statutory school age. 50% of children in care nationwide reach school leaving age with no educational qualifications and a significant percentage are unemployed a year after leaving care. Educational underachievement and social isolation are clear issues for this very vulnerable group. (Source: Schools Web May 2024)

Helping Children who are Looked After succeed and provide a better future for them is a key priority for Buckinghamshire schools (whether they be looked after by Bucks or another local authority). This policy takes account of all related legislation and guidance including:

- Dfes Statutory Guidance updated February 2018 [Schools: statutory guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- The virtual school, Buckinghamshire 'How to support looked after children' [The Virtual School | Family Information Service](#)

Spinfield School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles.

- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Promoting attendance
- Early intervention and priority action
- Targeting support
- Minimising exclusions
- Achieving continuity and promoting stability
- Listening to children
- Promoting a wider learning experience
- Promoting health and well being
- Working in Partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

Actions

As for all our pupils, Spinfield School is committed to helping every looked after child to achieve the highest standards they can, including out of school activities and supporting career aspirations for further and higher education. This can be measured by improvements in their achievement and attendance.

The Governing Board of Spinfield School is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will adhere to the following statutory requirements in respect of Children who are Looked After:

- Ensure a designated Teacher for Children who are Looked After is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below. This person is Rebecca Holland, Deputy Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed in line with statutory and Bucks guidance on PEP's for every Looked After Child. This will be the responsibility of the Designated Teacher.
- Identify a Nominated Governor for Children who are Looked After. This is Keith Spence, Chair of Governors and governor responsible for Pupil Premium and Special Educational Needs.

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of looked after children when reviewing them:

- School Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Equalities Policies
- Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

Spinfield will ensure that the needs of looked after children are reflected in all aspects of our provision e.g through assemblies, PSHE etc. We will raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve the highest possible level.

Responsibility of the Head Teacher

- Identify a designated teacher for Children who are Looked After, whose role is set out below. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated teacher not be available to carry out these legal duties.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission progress, attendance and exclusions (if any) of looked after children and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of looked after children.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

- Identify a Nominated Governor for Children who are Looked After
- Ensure that all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of looked after children.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs of all its looked after children regardless of the originating authority.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of looked after children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

This Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of Children who are Looked After, through a termly assessment data
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies, practices and procedures to ensure looked after children achieve and enjoy their time at the school.
- Ensure the school has a designated teacher for Children who are Looked After and that they are enabled and supported, along with the Head Teacher and other staff, to carry out their responsibilities as below
- Receive a report each year setting out:
 - The number of looked after pupils on roll (if any) and dates of joining and/or leaving.
 - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - Their results in SATs, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.

- The number and duration of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The destination of pupils who leave the school
- The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Ensure systems are in place to share the above annual report with School Improvement Partners and OFSTED in line with current statutory requirements. In addition to the report, to provide information to the virtual school team on LAC on a termly basis.

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 Children who are Looked After, accessing 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 Management Team. Specialist training advice and support for the role of designated teacher will be provided by the virtual school. It should also be noted that the remit of OFSTED inspectors and School Improvement Partners may include a specific focus on CLA, monitoring how the school has promoted their inclusion and attainment, and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan that transition with the child's social worker.
- Ensure a PEP is completed with the child, their social worker (if applicable), carer and other relevant people at least 2 weeks before the statutory reviews.
- Ensure that each Child who is Looked After has an identified member of staff they can talk to: this needs not be the designated teacher, as it will be based on the child's own situation and wishes. It should be noted that members of staff who take on this role may also need to make use of appropriate support from the school's pastoral staff and Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Track academic and other progress and target support appropriately.
- Coordinate any support for Children who are Looked After that is necessary within the school and from outside.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Facilitate and encourage looked after to join extra-curricular activities and maximise out of school learning opportunities.
- Ensure as far as possible attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as needs of looked after children.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties, (e.g. carer, social worker, birth family, other professionals), where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and where appropriate between schools.
- Be proactive in supporting transitions and planning when moving to a new phase in their education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that 60% of looked after children nationally say that they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure all required information is collated and sent to the virtual school every term.

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 positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it necessary.
- Respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable looked after children to achieve stability and success within the school.
- Promote the self-esteem of 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 policy.

The Head Teacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Advice, information and support is available from the virtual school to Governors and staff around general issues as well as issues relating to specific children.