

# Holy Trinity Rosehill CE (VA) Primary School



## Policy for Looked After Children

## **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY**

Holy Trinity Rosehill CE (VA) Primary School believes that, in partnership with Stockton Borough Council as Corporate Parents, we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of looked after children.



**Designated Teacher for Looked After Children:** Helen Green (SENCO)

**Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children:** Barbara Porritt (Governor)

## **Rationale**

‘Looked after children’ are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of children who come into care are there because of abuse or neglect, domestic violence or parents’ drug related issues.

It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when they are compared to their peers. As a school we recognise that outcomes nationally for looked after children fall well below national averages and we understand and support the government agenda to address this disparity.

As corporate parents in Stockton-on-Tees we all have a part to play in this, 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 and post 16 progression; and
- celebrating success.

The staff and Governing Body of Holy Trinity Rosehill CE (VA) Primary School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and achievement.

This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (November 2005), the revised guidance under The Children Act 1989, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (March 2010), the Statutory guidance for governing bodies 2009 and associated guidance on the education of looked after children.

We aim to give looked after children within our school the best opportunities and support to be safe and healthy, to achieve in education and their career, and enable them to play an active role in their community.

Above all, as corporate parents we will preface all our thinking, planning, actions and decisions with:  
**‘If this were my child I would.....’**

### **The aims of the school are to ensure that:**

- school policies and procedures are inclusive of looked after children;
- all looked after children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and this includes a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the child’s needs and ability;
- looked after children take as full a part as possible in all school activities including extra curricular activities;
- carers, social workers and the Virtual School Headteacher for looked after children are kept fully informed of the child’s progress and attainment, attendance and transition arrangements;
- appropriate interventions are put in place when there is concern about a child’s lack of progress;
- looked after children are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision; and
- all staff are appropriately trained to support the needs of looked after children.

### **Who are ‘Looked After Children’?**

Under the Children 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 by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the 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 or they may be fostered with family members. All these groups are said to be “Looked After Children” (LAC). They may be looked after by Stockton on Tees local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Stockton on Tees

### **Admissions**

The Governing Body endorses Stockton Borough Council policy. This school, as the Admission Authority, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against looked after children. Due to care placement changes, looked after children may enter school mid-term. It is vital that as a school we ensure that they are. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to give a positive welcome and help them feel secure.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our Looked After Children Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all looked after children and will be kept up to date via reports from the Designated Teacher / Head Teacher/ Governor.

### **The Role of the Designated Teacher**

At Holy Trinity Rosehill CE (VA) Primary School the principle responsibilities for the Designated Teacher (DT) include:

- be an advocate for LAC within school;
- give regard to the impact of decisions for LAC on both the child and the rest of the school community;
- know the names of all the LAC in school and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required;
- attend relevant training about looked after children and disseminate as appropriate;
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to looked after children, seeking advice from the LACE where appropriate;
- ensure that looked after children receive a positive welcome on entering school, and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- ensure that clear procedures for the induction of LAC are in place;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child’s PEP within school;
- ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP, in partnership with the social worker, that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan wherever possible;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at termly intervals;
- provide assessment data on a termly basis to ensure the head teacher of the Virtual School and LACE team can monitor and evaluate pupil progress;

- provide attendance data to the LA Attendance and Exclusion Service and inform them of any concerns regarding attendance or punctuality;
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a looked after child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk or 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 governors 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 looked after children;
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a looked after child transfers to another educational placement;
- contribute information to Looked After Reviews when required;
- report to the Governing Body on LAC in the school and inform them of relevant policy and practice development;
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc;
- prepare reports for Governors to include:
  - The number of LAC on roll and confirms the PEP for each;
  - The attendance of LAC compared to other pupils;
  - The attainment of LAC at end of key stages compared to other pupils;
  - How pupil premium is being spent on each LAC;
  - The achievement (progress) of LAC compared to other pupils;
  - The number, if any, of fixed term exclusions for LAC pupils;
  - The destinations of LAC pupils who leave the school;
- arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the child/young person can talk to; and
- ensure that any identified Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEND.

### **All Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff**

All staff are involved in the development of the school's LAC policy and are fully aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for LAC.

Class teachers are fully involved in providing for the needs of the children in their care, as well as collecting additional information for the DT and other agencies. Teachers are also involved in completing a child's PEP. All teaching staff should:

- follow school procedures;
- track the progress of LAC and put appropriate strategies in place when a looked after child is underperforming;
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about the progress of all LAC;
- have high expectations for the educational and personal achievements of LAC;
- promote the raising of a looked after child's self-esteem;
- ensure any looked after child 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 looked after child is experiencing difficulties;
- be aware that the LA has a policy of no permanent exclusion for LAC. If fixed term exclusion is unavoidable, the inclusion team must be contacted and first day provision put in place. Staff should be 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; and

- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals / parents / carers / pupil as appropriate.

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

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice;
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC;
- ensure there is a designated teacher for LAC;
- liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met;
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher;
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher;
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
  - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational; and
  - out of school learning and extra curricular activities;
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for looked after children; and
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to exclusion meetings of LAC, if they arise.

### **Allocation of resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for looked after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The Governing Body will hold the school to account for the progress and attainment of looked after children.

### **Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children**

The social worker for the looked after child should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or entering care. Wherever possible the looked after child should be actively involved in determining their plan. It is vital that we assess each looked after child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning and progression.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all looked after children at regular intervals and will provide the Local Authority with termly information as requested. The school will put in place strategies to prevent underachievement and provide appropriate challenge for gifted and talented pupils in order that pupils can fulfil their potential.

Each LAC attracts a Pupil Premium of £1,900 per annum of which the school receives £1,500. The Pupil Premium is recorded on the LAC PEP and costed provision map.

The school will inform the Attendance and Exclusion Service of any concerns regarding attendance and liaise with the service regarding all matters relating to fixed term exclusions.

Every PEP will be reviewed termly as initiated by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) or social worker following the LAC Review meeting or where there is a change to the child's circumstances. The young person's views should be sought by the class teacher or Designated Teacher where appropriate and noted on the PEP. The young person will be invited to the PEP meeting and encouraged to voice his/her views.

Following the PEP review, the Designated Teacher is responsible for completing the PEP and sending to the Head Teacher. Once the Head Teacher has approved the PEP she will place it securely on-line as part of the Virtual School information system.

## **Transition**

The school will ensure that all stakeholders are provided with the appropriate information, advice and guidance to support the smooth and effective transition of looked after children and young people at all key stages.

## **Record Keeping**

The designated teacher will know the names of all the looked after children 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 looked after children from other authorities who are attending the school. The school will indicate looked after children status accurately in the school's information systems. Class teachers keep a record of targets, provision and outcomes for all LAC. All information regarding LAC are filed in the child's LAC file in a locked filing cabinet, in the SEN room.

## **Staff Development**

Staff will attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support looked after children and disseminate this professional development to all relevant staff. The Designated Teacher's role includes being a focal point for all issues associated with looked after children.

## **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

A Holy Trinity Rosehill CE (VA) Primary School we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents / carers and care workers to enable looked after children to achieve their potential. Review meetings, which take place every term, are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

## **Links with external agencies/organisations**

We also recognise the important contribution that external services make in supporting looked after children. Colleagues involved may be from the following support services:

- Looked After Children Education Team (LACE);
- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services;
- SEND
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Attendance and Inclusion Service
- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service.

## **Reporting to the Governing Body**

In line with the statutory guidance the Designated Teacher will provide the Governing Body, as a minimum, with an annual report on the progress of looked after children and young people.

## **Review and evaluation of Policy for Looked After Children**

We consider the Policy for LAC to be important and we will undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice with key stakeholders. The outcomes of this review will inform the School Improvement Plan.



