



"We all flourish from a wealth of learning experiences that positively impact on our educational, physical and emotional success"

Looked After Children (LAC) and previously looked-after children (PLAC) Policy



Approved by:	S Steer	Date: 03/02/2023
Last reviewed on:	February 2023	
Next review due by:	February 2024	

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies, guidance and acts:

- The Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).
- 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*).

As a Corporate Parent, supporting Looked After Children to succeed is a key priority for Medway Council. It is committed to working in partnership with carers, all education providers, governors, professionals, voluntary organisations, other local authorities and all stakeholders to secure success and provide a better future for Looked After Children.

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Early years provision, schools and post-16 educational facilities have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to succeed and thrive.

The Council will champion appropriate assessment of needs and prioritise timely interventions to secure the best possible outcomes for all Looked After Children. It will ensure that staff working with Looked after Children are appropriately trained and supported. A priority both for the Council's policy and for its practice will be to ensure that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy, to achieve, to make a positive contribution to society and to achieve economic well being.

Medway's Virtual Headteacher will provide strategic and specific educational support, and will challenge and guide Designated Teachers and school leaders. (S)he will work closely with Looked After Children themselves and with other professionals, stakeholders and carers to secure the best possible outcomes for all Looked After Children. In addition, the Virtual Headteacher will work in partnership with other local authority staff and organisations to monitor the outcomes for Looked After Children, to identify areas for development and to take appropriate steps to secure improvement.

Medway's Educational Psychology Service supports pre-schools and schools in prioritising, understanding and meeting the needs of their Looked After Children. The Educational Psychology Service provides relevant training and consultation support to school staff and other professionals/agencies, as well as working with individual Looked After Children, their carers and teachers. The Educational Psychology Service ensures schools have an effective understanding of the attachment needs of our young people and the implications of such needs for successful teaching and learning.

Young people who have been adopted or who are subject to special guardianship

The Council recognises that many young people who have been adopted or who are subject to special guardianship require additional support in order to succeed. For some of these young people, similar support to that required for Looked after Children may be necessary as most have been looked after themselves and have experienced disrupted parenting. The Council is committed to provide this by working with guardians, adoptive parents, education providers, governors, professionals, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders.

In addition, the Council will work with Virtual School Team, education providers and other local authorities to maintain appropriate confidentiality and to facilitate the secure transfer of all necessary information.

Policy Statement

The Bluebell Federation's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children and Looked After Children who have subsequently been adopted or subject to special guardianship is based on the following principles for each such child:

- Understanding the particular needs of each looked after child.
- Prioritising education and progression.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.

- Early intervention and priority action to promote high attainment.
- Listening to the children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.
- Monitor performance and plan educational support

Implications

The Governing Body of The Bluebell Federation School is committed to recognising and taking account of the fact that individuals' personal circumstances can affect attitudes and performance and that this is particularly the case for young people who are or who have been in care. As for all pupils, The Bluebell Federation School is committed to helping every Looked After Child, and those who have subsequently been adopted or subject to special guardianship, to achieve the highest standards they can. This will include developing aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

We are committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below (**Horsted: Mrs Sarah Steer and Swingate: Matt Wignall**)
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for every Looked After Child, in line with Medway's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Identify a governor who is prepared to be trained as **Designated Governor for Looked After Children – Stephen Roe**

Links to other policies and documents

This policy links with a number of other school policies and documents. It is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them. These policies and documents include:

- Behaviour Policy.
- Discipline Policy.
- Home School Agreement.
- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Single Equality Scheme and Policies
- Child Protection Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

The school will champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Monitoring Arrangements

The governing body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that Looked After Children are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school. This will be achieved by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Looked After Children achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort. Ensure that the school has a suitably qualified Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support and challenge 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 discrete group, compared to other pupils.

3. Their end of year attainment, levels, grades and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) for LAC pupils.
5. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

Responsibility of the headteacher

- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children and act where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Ensure that appropriate and effective actions are taken to close any gaps in the attainment of Looked after Pupils and that their outcomes are in line with those of their peers.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children. OFSTED now select a number of Looked After Children, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that the adoptive parents or guardians of previously Looked After Children have ready access to an identified member of staff of similar standing as the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

- Ensure that all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and the guidances for looked after children.
- Be aware of whether the school has any looked after children and how many (no names given)
- Ensure that there is a Designated Teacher and that they have undertaken appropriate training.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children.
- Support the Head of school/ designated teacher to allocate resources (including Pupil Premium) to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Appoint a nominated Governor for Looked After Children.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy annually.

The role of the designated teacher

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

Our Designated teachers are:

The Bluebell Federation School: Sarah Steer

Swingate School: Matt Wignall

Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for LAC. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through our Virtual Headteacher and Social Care Team. Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on Looked After Children, 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 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 the focus of Personal Education Plan review meetings is on securing appropriate progress and that the review clearly identifies targets and the support necessary to achieve them.
- 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. Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by our Family Liaison Officer or Designated Teacher. They should also be alert to any child

protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

- 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.
- Recognise that timely intervention is more effective than exclusion and set up 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.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that a high proportion of Looked After Children have experienced bullying so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Work in partnership with the Medway Virtual Headteacher and Virtual Headteachers of other authorities.
- Ensure that Personal Education Plans, attendance and attainment data and other requested information are returned to the Virtual Headteacher as requested.
- Be aware of the most recent developments in the education and support of Looked After Children and seek any necessary support and guidance from the local authority's Virtual Headteacher.

The role of the identified member of staff for previously looked after children who have been adopted or who are subject to special guardianship

If requested by parents or guardians, the identified member of staff will provide additional appropriate support to:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their parent/guardian.
- Work with parents/guardians and Virtual School to complete a Personal Education Plan.
- Review the Personal Education Plan at key transitions and when appropriate.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- 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.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.

The responsibilities of all staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of all pupils, including 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 to whom they can talk when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children and other pupils to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children and all other pupils.
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children and of previously Looked After Pupils.
- Be aware that a high proportion of Looked After Children have experienced bullying so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

Confidentiality

- Information on looked after children 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.

Personal education plan (pep) completion

1. Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school)
2. Date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
3. A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
4. A date is set for the next pep meeting Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.
5. PEP sent by SW to the LAC team