

ROWAN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

POLICY REVIEW

This policy has been reviewed in line with the following: (Reviewer please tick box)

- a) Ensuring the policy is up to date and meets mandatory requirements
- b) Ensuring the policy is fit for purpose and that practice adheres to the policy.

Reviewed and Updated in May 2021 by

Julia Coles

Policy will be reviewed again in May 2022

ROWAN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

This school policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching and support staff and has the full agreement of the governing body.

"This policy reflects the philosophy of the Equality Policy, the Mission Statement and the School Aims in relation to the whole curriculum".

Definition

Looked After is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

Rowan Gate Primary School recognises that Looked After Children/ Previously Looked After Children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

At Rowan Gate School we believe that each and every child has a unique place within our school family and that the contribution each child makes is important. We also recognise that "Looked after Children and Previously Looked After Children" have a particular need. These needs must be met in a very individual way according to the circumstances.

Nationally, Looked after Children/Previously Looked after Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled, healthy, staff safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Helping Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority at Rowan Gate. This policy takes account of:

- 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 Promoting the Education of Looked After Children: Statutory guidance for local authorities February 2018
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2009
- Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors.)

Rowan Gate's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all LAC.
- Prioritising education- All LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of LAC.

AIMS

As for all our pupils, Rowan Gate is committed to helping every Looked After Child/Previously Looked after Children to achieve the highest standard they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

We are committed to equal opportunities for all our children. We expect to provide a high quality educational experience for each child, regardless of race, gender or disability, through the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all our children.

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC/Previously Looked after Children may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognises that LAC are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

STRATEGY

1. All staff are made aware of the care arrangements for our children in public care. They are kept informed of any change in circumstances affecting individual children. This enables staff to deal empathetically with any difficulties or queries that may arise. The Designated Teacher for LAC will facilitate communication with the following agencies:
 - (a) Social Services
 - (b) Children and Families
 - (c) Virtual School Teams
 - (d) The school considers that it is essential that good links are made and maintained with all agencies. We actively promote an inter-

agency approach to enable the needs of children in public care to be met.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Headteacher will facilitate school attendance where there are difficulties/emergencies, which Social Care & Health cannot meet. All other attendance matters are referred to the Looked After Childs Social Worker/Virtual School Team

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of LAC and Young People/Previously Looked after Children in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff. A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC/YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition. It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

HOME / SCHOOL LINKS

These will be developed as appropriate and co-ordinated by the Designated Teacher and Class teacher. The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC/Previously Looked after Children to achieve their potential. Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

We regard it as essential that the education of a child in public care is supported in every way possible. The relevant Virtual School Team will be informed when a child who is in public care enters the school and advice and support will be requested if necessary. The school will facilitate the team's involvement.

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of LAC/Previously Looked after Children. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC/Previously Looked after Children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. Provision will be put into place to support those LAC/Previously Looked after Children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs.

MONITORING

The Governors will be made aware of numbers of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children in school. The Headteacher will update the Governors termly,

via the Headteacher's Report, on the situation regarding any Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children in school.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEAD TEACHER

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC/Previously Looked after Children, whose role is set out below.
- It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body of Rowan Gate is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure Looked After Children are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006. (These require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to LAC in their oversubscription criteria.)
- Ensure a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for every Looked After Child, in line with DfE's guidance on Personal Educational Plans.
- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC/Previously Looked after Children are recognised and met.

Procedures: The Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of all Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children, through an annual report (see below.)
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Looked After Children/Previously 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 Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Deputy Head Teacher in her role as Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 1. The number of looked-after pupils/Previously Looked after Children on the school's roll (if any.)
 2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 3. Their Achievement and Attainment scores as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any.)
 5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

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

Governors should be aware that all schools are required to have a designated teacher for LAC/Previously Looked after Children. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through the Virtual School. 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.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the LAC/Previously Looked after Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- 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 each Looked After Child/Previously Looked after Children has a 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 someone from the school's pastoral staff. 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.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.

- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs/Previously Looked after Children may face.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC/Previously Looked after Children to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meeting.
- Act as an advisor of staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children.
- Set up timely meeting 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 if supporting transition and planning when moving a new phase in education.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that the audit on attendance and numbers is returned to the LAC Education Advisor every term as requested
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding LAC/Previously Looked after Children.

The responsibility of all staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC/Previously Looked after Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's/Previously Looked after Children confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC/Previously Looked after Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC/Previously Looked after Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC/Previously Looked after Children.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy

PUPIL PREMIUM

Pupils who have ever been looked after are entitled to receive additional funding called pupil premium plus. This is additional funding given to publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers.

Pupil premium funding is available to both mainstream and non-mainstream schools, such as special schools and pupil referral units.

The Designated Teacher for Looked after children/Previously Looked after Children will consider their learning needs and arrange for each child to have additional support specific to their needs.

At Rowan Gate Primary School pupils the majority of looked after children have additional support in reading, some have 1:1 sports coaching to improve and boost their self-esteem, some have speech and language therapy if this is what is needed.

Schools are held accountable for the way in which pupil premium funding is used and have to show the impact of pupil premium funding in the following ways:

- performance tables, which show the performance of disadvantaged pupils compared with their peers
- requiring schools to publish details online each year of how they are using the pupil premium and the impact it is having on pupil achievement
- the Ofsted inspection framework, where inspectors focus on the attainment of pupil groups, and in particular those who attract the pupil premium

This policy was ratified in May 2021 and will be reviewed in May 2022.