



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Policy & Procedure No.

OP05

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Reference to

OP02 Safeguarding & Child Protection
ECS02 Running Away and Missing
Children Act 1989

1. Rationale

Seadown Schools believe that we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children and in tackling the causes of social exclusion. Through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation schools can provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

2. Definition

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 under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects 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.

All these groups are said to be ‘Looked After Children’ (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority.

3. Allocation of Resources

The Governors will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with all stakeholders within the child’s life to ensure that Looked After Children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

4. Legal Framework

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of looked after children.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all looked after children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of looked after children (At Seadown School this is Ben Kinslow)
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of looked after children

5. Objectives

We will:

- Work alongside outside agencies (where appropriate) to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

In Pursuit of this Policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them (Ben Kinslow – Senior Teacher, Seadown School, Worthing)
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children in the school are considered at a school management level and to support the Safeguarding Team (Steve Alexander)
- Support the Designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Looked After Children.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care

status. However, we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this many are not possible.

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked after children.

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- the school has a coherent policy for looked after children
- the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfES guidelines
- the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- the Governing body receives an annual report

The Head Teacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher
- ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- oversee the development of the policy on looked after children
- be responsible for all systems to support looked after children.
- report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints

The Designated Teacher will:

The designated teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school.

The designated teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked after children of the school by:

- maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- acting as an advocate for looked after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances

The designated teacher will:

- set up systems to monitor and record the progress and attendance of all looked after children
- have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after
- maintain records regarding all looked after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer

- monitor the educational progress of all looked after children and intervene, in cooperation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern

The designated teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child’s Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked after children
- helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings – where applicable
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- inviting the responsible outside agencies to all meetings and liaising with them regarding the development of a PEP.

The designated teacher will monitor each child’s achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- by meeting with the looked after child to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role
- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues (this maybe the class teacher in a primary school)
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- by requesting support from the SENCo and/or Deputy Head / Headteacher and/or outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a looked after child requires additional academic or behavioural support
- by working closely with the SENCo and/or Deputy Head / Headteacher to ensure all looked after children with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- by having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions
- by ensuring all looked after children are made to feel a part of the school environment

END

POSITION	Headteacher	NAME		SIGNATURE		DATE	
POSITION	Governor	NAME		SIGNATURE		DATE	
POSITION		NAME		SIGNATURE		DATE	