

# Crosslee Community Primary School



**Crosslee Community Primary School**

**Policy for Looked After Children**

**March 2022**

## **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility.

Crosslee Community Primary School recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Guidance on the Education of Looked After Children" (May 2000) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

## **Definition**

Children who are "looked after" may be "Accommodated" "In Care" or "remanded/ detained" as follows:

### Accommodated (Section 20)

This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

### In Care

A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

### Remanded/Detained

A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:

- an emergency protection order
- removed by police using their powers of protection
- remanded by a court following criminal charges
- a court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

## **Objectives**

### **Looked After Children in this school will:**

- Receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support.
- Have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities.

### **Teachers and other staff in this school will:**

- Receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and well-being of Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them.
- Plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children.

### **The Looked After Designated Teacher and Senior Leadership will:**

- Identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place.
- Ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies.

## **Wellbeing Support**

The nurturing approach offers a range of opportunities for children and young people to engage with missing early nurturing experiences, giving them the social and emotional skills to do well at school and with peers, develop their resilience and their capacity to deal more confidently with the trials and tribulations of life, for life.

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support the designated teacher for Looked After Children will:

- Ensure that staff are aware of any looked after children in school, know who the carer is, and whether parents have parental rights so they know who should receive copies of reports etc.
- Liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend LAC review meetings and PEP meetings, unless delegated to another member of SLT.
- Work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after children receive their entitlement.
- Ensure that records and plans are kept and maintained appropriately.
- Provide information to the Governing Body and LA about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils on the school roll.
- Secure training for the designated teacher or others as appropriate to ensure that the school can meet the needs of looked after pupils.

## **Strategies**

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The designated person and SENDCO will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff.
- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties.
- Talk to the child.
- We recognise that there are factors which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as highly as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that under-achievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results.

If progress is not as could be expected:

- When required professional agencies involvement will be sought.
- We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark Mother's Day or to investigate family history, may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Designated Teacher is Anne-Marie Crew**

The role of the Designated Teacher is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Designated Teacher will:

- Attend training sessions organised by the LA.
- Cascade this training to school staff.

- Arrange and/or deliver training to all staff, including those newly appointed, on issues affecting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and the ways in which educational disadvantage can be overcome.
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register.
- Work closely with Social Workers and other LA staff to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans which will inform Care Plans.
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans.

### **The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership**

The responsibility for the educational and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Headteacher, although some of the day-to-day tasks may be delegated to other staff. Working with the Senior Leadership Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Designated Teacher, are enabled to carry them out.

### **Governors responsibility for Looked After Children (Mrs Sue Nicholson)**

The named governor will work alongside the designated teacher to report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of Looked After pupils in the school.
- A comparison of test scores for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils.
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions.

### **Liaison with Outside Agencies**

To ensure that all those involved in the education and care of Looked After Children work together in their best interests, the Designated Teacher will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for:

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives.
- Liaising with Social Workers to ensure all Looked After Children have a Personal Education Plan.
- Participation in and co-ordination of Review and Planning meetings for Looked After Children. Statutory school procedures such as Annual Reviews for children with Statements of SEN will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible and appropriate. In addition, school management will do everything possible to enable class teachers or other appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

### **Electronic Personal Education Plans**

The statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under S52 of the Children Act 2004 makes it clear that the Personal Education Plan (PEP) is not only an integral part of The Care Plan but also provides the means by which a looked after child's educational progress and achievement can be monitored. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which secures good basic skills, stretches aspirations and builds life chances.

The PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority and the school but should involve all those with an interest in the child's education including:

- The child/young person.
- The social worker.
- The designated teacher.

- The carer.
- The parent (where appropriate).

Effective and high quality PEPs should:

- be a comprehensive and enduring record of the child's experience, progress and achievement (academic and otherwise);
- be linked to information in other education plans, including a statement of special educational needs and IEPs;
- identify developmental and educational needs (short and long term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
- set short term targets, including progress monitoring against each of the areas
- identified against development and educational needs;
- set long term plans and educational targets and aspirations (e.g. in relation to public examinations, further and higher education, work experience and career plans and aspirations);
- document identified actions for specific individuals intended to support the achievement of agreed targets;
- identify whether the child is eligible for the Pupil Premium and if so how the allowance will be used to support the targets set in the PEP;

### **The initial PEP**

The statutory guidance states that it is the social worker's responsibility to initiate the PEP and that every child and young person looked after should have a PEP in place for the first statutory review of the Care Plan (within 20 days). It is expected that a PEP will be completed for all compulsory school age children, those in Early Years provision and those over compulsory school age who are in education. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the progress the child/young person is making, identify any barriers to progress, agree appropriate targets and develop an action plan that will support the child/young person in achieving their objectives. It is important therefore that as much information as possible is gathered in advance and made available to the meeting. The child/young person and parent(s) should be involved as far as is appropriate and possible. If a child/young person is without education provision, the Education Manager for Looked After Children will be consulted.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Arranging for the child or young person to complete their section of the PEP, which gives an opportunity for the child to have their views taken into account and valued
- Completing the sections of the form which require information relating to attainment, progress, target setting, attendance, support needs and school interventions and identifying those education colleagues who will have a contribution to make to the meeting

The Social Worker is responsible for:

- Consulting with carers and parents who should be encouraged to attend the meeting as they have a key role to play as the first line of support for the child or young person's education
- Completing the sections of the form which require information relating to personal details, care details, responsibilities

### **Reviewing the PEP**

The PEP will need to be reviewed on a termly basis to ensure that it takes account of progress, changes and transitions. The review should always involve a meeting so that the views of all those involved can be taken account of in developing the action plan – if holding a meeting to review the PEP is not possible the Education Manager for Looked After Children must be consulted.

## **Confidentiality and information sharing**

The Designated Teacher will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the Designated Teacher will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school and to be completed at the earliest opportunity.

Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Designated Teacher of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties. If child is attending an alternative provision school will liaise with the appropriate staff.

The Designated Teacher will talk to young people about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is in order to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school. The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the young person.

Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:

- Termly Pupil Progress Meetings.
- Termly Tracking of progress and inclusion of interventions as appropriate.
- Parent/Carers Evenings with the class teacher will be held in the Autumn and Summer Term to discuss progress.
- All progress will be reported anonymously to governors annually.
- Termly meetings will be held with carers and all professional involved with the child in order to review progress / impact / next steps of individual Personal Education Plan
- This information will be analysed by the Senior Leadership Team to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole.
- All children in school including Looked After Children are tracked on a termly basis. Their progress will be analysed against other children in school to ensure they are making progress in line with their peers. Interventions are arranged if required.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is monitored for all children in school including Looked After Children. The school will work alongside virtual school sharing the attendance of the Looked After Children when data is requested. Any absence is followed up and if absence is a concern, carers and professionals will be invited into school to meet with the Head Teacher and the Attendance Officer. If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted to gain their support and collect any relevant information.
- The Virtual School will be alerted.
- Attendance and punctuality is tracked on a daily basis and acted upon if required.

## **Admission arrangements**

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC 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 Looked After children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Looked After Children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

## **Behaviour**

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage:

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child.
- The staff will follow the school behaviour and anti-bullying policy. The strategies including within these documents take into account all children's needs.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service and The Virtual School will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the challenging behaviour.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements.

## **Exclusions**

Crosslee Community Primary School recognises that Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy for more information.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school-based activities because of poor relationships with their peers, for example. As we believe it is essential that Looked After Children are able to play a full part in school life, the following strategies are in place to help them to do this:

- The Designated Teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities through Personal Education Plan meetings

## **Evaluation**

The general success and appropriateness of this policy will be evaluated annually. The next review will be Spring 2023.