



# **Children Looked After Policy**

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**Reviewed and updated March 2020**

## **Policy for the Education of 'Looked After Children'**

### **Rationale:**

There is national evidence that 'Children Looked After' are socially disadvantaged, significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion than their peers. Schools have a major role to play in promoting the education of children who are 'looked after' by ensuring that they are healthy and safe and provided with support they need in order to achieve their full potential. This is in accordance with section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Enabling 'Children Looked After' to succeed and supporting them in building a better future is a key priority for Nelson Primary School.

Our policy takes account of:

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Pupil, Premium: How schools are using the pupil premium to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils (DfE 2012)
- DfES Statutory Guidance to Governing Bodies: "Supporting Looked After Learners" 2006.
- The Local Authority's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the education of looked after children (LAC).
- 'If this were my child' (Local Government Information Unit 2003)
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2007.
- "Show Me How I Matter: a guide to the education of looked after children" LGA and IDEA publication 2006.
- Section 576 Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 (amended)

### **Objectives:**

Nelson Primary School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- High expectations
- Promoting inclusion by challenging attitudes towards vulnerable children
- Promoting regular attendance
- Early intervention and priority action
- Targeting support
- Minimising exclusions

- Achieving continuity and promoting stability
- Listening to children
- Promoting a wider learning experience
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

As for all our pupils, Nelson Primary School is committed to helping all 'Children Looked After' to achieve the highest possible standards. This can be measured by their attitude to learning, academic progress and general well-being. Nelson Primary School will promote the needs of 'Children Looked After', by raising awareness and challenging negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve their full potential. Responsibilities in relation to 'Children Looked After' apply to children who are currently 'Looked After' or who have been 'Looked After' in the past.

The term 'CLA' refers to children who may have had a range of legal statuses including:

- Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Child Arrangement Order(CAO)
- Adoption Order

The school is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and we adhere to the following statutory requirements in respect of 'Children Looked After':

- Ensure a Designated Teacher for 'Children Looked After' is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed in line with statutory and Newham guidance on PEPs for every looked after child.

This policy links with a number of other school documents and policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of 'Children Looked After' when reviewing the following:

- Oversubscription Criteria
- School Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Duty
- Safeguarding Policy
- Inclusion Policy

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEAD TEACHER**

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for 'Children Looked After', in accordance with the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, section 20. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated teacher not be available to carry out these legal duties.
- Identify a Designated Teacher for children who have been previously 'Looked After', in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017, section 20A.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission, progress, attendance and exclusions (if any) of 'Children Looked After' and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of 'Children Looked After'.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

## **THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Government guidance recommends that the Designated Teacher should be 'someone with sufficient authority to make things happen; who should be an advocate for looked after children, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.'

It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Specialist training, advice and support for the role of Designated Teacher will be provided by the virtual school for 'Children Looked After' (CLA). It should also be noted that the remit of OFSTED inspectors and School Improvement Partners now includes a specific focus on CLA; 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 for current 'Children Looked After' and children previously 'Looked After' is the Assistant Head teacher for Inclusion, Deena Osborne. With regard to 'Children Looked After', her responsibilities are as follows:

- To ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer; using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- To ensure that PEPs are updated and reviewed three times a year, or at the point of any major change and that they contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan
- To ensure that a PEP is completed with the child, their social worker, carer and other relevant people at least 2 weeks before their statutory reviews.

- To ensure that the child's views are included in PEP meetings and the child is supported to complete the Pupil Consultation section of the Personal Education Plan to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings.
- To discuss the most effective use of the Pupil Premium grant in order to raise attainment of 'Children Looked After' and report on its use at individual PEP meetings.
- To ensure that each looked after child has an identified member of staff they can talk to: this need not be the designated teacher, as it will be based on the child's own situation and wishes. It should be noted that members of staff who take on this role may also need to make use of appropriate support from the school's pastoral staff and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- To track academic and other progress and target support appropriately.
- To co-ordinate any support for 'Children Looked After' that is necessary within the school and from outside.
- To ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- To facilitate and encourage 'Children Looked After' to join extra-curricular activities and maximise out of school learning.
- To attend planning and review meetings whenever possible.
- To act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as needs of 'Children Looked After'.
- To set up timely meetings with relevant parties (eg carer, social worker, birth family, other professionals) where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or at risk of exclusion.
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and where appropriate between schools.
- To be pro-active in supporting transitions and planning when moving to a new phase in their education.
- To promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- To actively monitor and prevent bullying of 'Children Looked After' in school.
- To share information on individual 'Children Looked After' with other school staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- To ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. End of year reports) are forwarded to the child's Social Worker, in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School.
- To exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in a child's circumstances, e.g. if there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision eg; behaviour or attendance

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

The Nominated Governor for 'Children Looked After' is currently Adwoa Debra. Her responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of 'Children Looked After'.
- Ensuring the school has an overview of the needs of all its 'Children Looked After', regardless of their originating authority.
- Allocating resources to meet the needs of 'Children Looked After'.
- Ensuring the school's policies and procedures support the needs of 'Children Looked After'.
- Ensure there is a designated member of the school staff with responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of registered pupils who are or have been 'Looked After' in accordance with subsection 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Ensure that the designated person undertakes appropriate training and has regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to 'Children Looked After'.

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of 'Children Looked After', through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure, where relevant, that 'Children Looked After' are given priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies, practices and procedures to ensure 'Children Looked After' achieve and enjoy their time at the school.
- Ensure the school has a Designated Teacher for 'Children Looked After' and that they are enabled and supported, along with the Head Teacher and other staff, to carry out their responsibilities.
- Receive a report each year setting out:
  - The number of looked after pupils (if any) on roll and dates of joining and/or leaving.
  - Their attendance, as a group, compared to other pupils.
  - Their attainment, as a group, compared to other pupils.
  - Their results in SATS compared to other pupils.
  - The number and duration of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) compared to other pupils.
  - The destination of pupils who leave the school.(The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.)
- Ensure systems are in place to share the above annual report with School Improvement Partners and OFSTED in line with current statutory requirements.

Also, to provide termly information to the Newham virtual school for 'Children Looked After'.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF**

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of 'Children Looked After', as for all pupils.
- Maintain looked after children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request for a Keyworker to whom they can talk when they feel it necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable 'Children Looked After' to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of 'Children Looked After'.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of 'Children Looked After'.

The Head Teacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Advice, information and support is available from the Newham virtual school for 'Children Looked After' to Governors and staff around general issues as well as issues relating to specific children.

## **Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures**

Each 'Child Looked After' will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker, the Advisory Teacher and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of focus and include targets and associated action to improve the student performance or educational achievement. Areas for consideration will include:

- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations Educational Data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any);

- Attendance;
- Behaviour;

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