



BIRCHENSALE MIDDLE SCHOOL

LOOKED AFTER LEARNERS POLICY

Date adopted by Governors: March 2020

Date of next review: March 2021

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Birchensale Middle School Looked After Children Policy

Introduction:

At Birchensale Middle School we believe that all Looked After Children have a right to expect the best possible outcome from their education. We recognise there is a considerable educational underachievement nationally of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers. All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Looked After Children, through the following six principles:

- Prioritising education
- Having high expectations
- Inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes
- Achieving continuity and stability
- Early intervention – priority action
- Listening to children

Legal framework:

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behavioural Policy (incorporating the Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Home School Agreement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

Who are our Looked After Children (LAC)?

Looked after children (LAC) are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

Previously-LAC are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The role of the designated teacher:

Within school systems:

- Ensure all staff are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'in care' and understand the need for positive systems to support them.
- To inform staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in the wider life of school.
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in care.
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked after.
- To ensure the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented and shared with relevant staff.
- To advise on the allocation of Pupil Premium for children looked after.
- To report to the governing Body on an annual basis on the outcomes for children looked after.

With individual children:

- To implement the Personal Education Plan for each child and review it as required.
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new looked after child into the school.
- To develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of children in care and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

Liaison:

200312 Looked After Children Policy (STAT) - Approved

- Liaise with designated safeguarding officer.
- Communicate with Children's Services staff/LAC team to put together Personal Education Plan and Care Plan.
- To attend LAC Review and PEP meetings.
- To ensure efficient transfer of information between agencies and individuals.

Training:

- Keep up-to-date on current policies and procedures in relation to looked after children.
- Cascade any relevant training/information to the rest of the staff.
- To attend any relevant courses/conferences and participate in any area cluster groups as appropriate.

2. The Governing Body will:

- ensure admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the Governing Body
- for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned
- review the effective implementation of this policy annually

3. The named governor for Looked After Children will be satisfied:

- the school has a clear and effective policy for Looked After Children
- the designated teacher has been appropriately trained
- the Governing Body receives an annual report on the performance of Looked After Children

At present the named governor is **Wendy Rigby**.

4. Admission arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with relevant personnel – carer/parent/social worker. Information will be shared to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate induction will take place and appropriate staff informed about the pupils needs.

5. Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan including a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the social worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of concern and include achievable targets.

The PEP should be renewed and updated every six months or at any point of major change in the circumstances for the looked after child/young person. A Statutory Review should also be held annually carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer.

The designated teacher will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all looked after children.

At present the Designated Teacher is **Rachel Batchelor**