

PROMOTING THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN (POST-LAC) POLICY

School Aims

Here at The Gates, we believe we have a crucial role in helping to raise the educational standards of our most vulnerable children. As a school, we recognise that Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are known to significantly underachieve, have poorer educational outcomes and remain at greater risk of educational and social exclusion compared with children who do not meet this criteria.. Improving the life chances through careful: planning, monitoring and evaluation of each individual LAC Child is of paramount importance to the staff at The Gates and something that as a school, we believe we do well. We believe it is our duty to support and guide our Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children we take this responsibility seriously

Working in partnership with social workers, the virtual school team, carers and families, our school understands the importance of providing a source of consistency and familiarity for children who may have been subject to abuse and/or neglect. We will ensure that discretion is used when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work that may be done in class around family.

Our school is an environment in which the children can: feel safe, be themselves, and receive emotional and academic support to enable them to reach their full potential. Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of our children and we understand that our school plays a fundamental role in this.As a school, we will ensure that all our LAC and previously LAC pupils have the same opportunities to participate fully in: the Curriculum; extracurricular activities and enjoy school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.All staff at The Gates will be positive role models for our Looked after Children. As a school we know our pupils will be stretched and challenged to achieve their fullest possible academic potential.

Definition

Looked After Child : The term "looked after" was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either 'accommodated by the Local Authority(LA)' meaning the LA provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility. Or it refers to a child who is subject to a 'care order' meaning that a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the LA in order to protect and promote a child's welfare.

Children in both instances could be living with foster carers; in a residential unit; in a residential school; with biological relatives or even with biological parents on a part or full time basis.

Previously Looked After Child. This is any child who has previously under the care of the Local Authority under the criteria stated above.

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 LAC.

From 1 September 2009 the Governing bodies of all Maintained schools are required, under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (the 2008 Act), to appoint a Designated Teacher (DT) to promote the educational achievement of LAC who are on the school role.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Priorities recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children
- Priorities 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
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of looked after children

The Role of the LAC Governor

The named Governor (Janet Ingham) will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher (Karen Forshaw) and the Designated Teacher (Paula Jackson) as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all LAC have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers.

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- The school has a coherent policy for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children
- The Designated Teacher has received appropriate training
- Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- The Governing body receives a LAC report every half term

The Role of the Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ultimately be responsible for all Looked After Children at her school and will meet with the appointed Designated Teacher regularly to ensure that the Looked after Children are attending, happy and achieving at school.

In addition to this, 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
- report to the Governing body on an annual basis

The Role of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher at The Gates Primary School is Paula Jackson (SENCO), line managed by Karen Forshaw (Head Teacher).

DfE Guidance 2018 states that *“The most effective designated teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school’s roll. This involves, working with VSHs to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalized learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.”* The DT will form strong bonds with all Looked after Children and previously Looked After Children at the school so that they feel they have an adult they can talk to and be honest with. Working together, they can decide what information is shared with other staff: negotiate with the child should be aware of their care status. Maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all Looked after Children, ensuring information is shared on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis.

The DT will work with all relevant adults to ensure the Looked after Children’s school experience is a positive one: this will include working with: the child, teachers, teaching assistants, social worker(s), carer(s) and parents (when appropriate).

The DT will ensure that they attend regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.

The DT will review all school policies, regularly, in the light of relevant guidance, publications and /or legislation.

The DT will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children in the form of a LAC report. She will have an overview and co-coordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are Looked After. The DT will share a report with the Head Teacher and LAC Governor on a half termly basis. The report will include: the number of looked After Pupils in the school; the attendance of pupils; the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions; the attainment of the pupils and care status of each child.

The DT will build positive home-school relationships between parents/carers with regular opportunities for dialogue.

The DT will act as a confidant by ensuring each Looked after Child knows they have a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues.

The DT will liaise with all other relevant staff by requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a looked after child requires additional academic or behavioral support.

The DT will attend all Looked After Child Reviews to share school successes and to ensure school has the most up-to-date information of our LAC children.

The DT will ensure that each Looked after Child has a Personal Education Plan in place that is both: fit for purpose and up to date.

Personal Education Plans

It is a legal requirement for each LAC child to have a Pupil Education Plan (PEP). It is a legal requirement to have Pupil Education Plan reviews every 6 months. Each child at The Gates Primary School will have a PEP that is fit for purpose.

The DT will ensure PEP reviews are all in date and the DT will set: achievable, effective, educational targets for each child by being proactive and participating in setting goals for each child.

The DT will ensure all relevant parties are invited to the PEP reviews including: social workers, other biological siblings, parents (when appropriate) and foster carers.

The purpose of each review is to assess: what is working well and what else needs to be done to support our LAC pupils.

Admissions

Regulations made under the School Standards and Framework Act (1998) requires schools to give LAC children highest priority in their admission arrangements. All Looked After Children are welcome at The Gates. Applications go straight to our Business Manager who will make the admission process quick and swift to ensure no further education is lost. A new LAC child will meet with our Designated Teacher and class teacher and share their hopes, expectations and fears. As a school we will make the child feel as comfortable as possible by introducing them to their class.

Conversations will take place with the child's carer and social worker so that school is aware of the child's history and needs.

Class support will be offered and the child will be made aware of whom they can go to and talk if they feel they need support.

If necessary, support will be put into place by the appropriate adult, whether that is the: DT, SENCO or class teacher.

At the Gates, we believe we foster a supportive and nurturing environment, delivered not only by the staff, but by the pupils. To ease transition we will buddy new pupils with a caring and supportive partner and have a graduated

transition into school. We have the highest standards for our LAC pupils and encourage each of them to adopt these standards for themselves by cultivating a Growth Mindset.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the DT (Paula Jackson), who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher (Karen Forshaw). The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor (Janet Ingham) and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head teacher's response.

Contact Details

Designated Teacher : Paula Jackson
Jacksonp@thegates.bolton.sch.uk
01942634734

Head Teacher: Karen Forshaw
forshawk@thegates.bolton.sch.uk
01942634734

LAC Governor: Janet Ingham
jingham9@aol.com

Monitoring

Paula Jackson is responsible for the monitoring and review of this policy and makes decisions in line with school policy.