



Uplands Junior School
Policy for the Looked After Children
June 2015
Review: June 2017

At Uplands Junior School we believe that all looked after children should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all any other children. We as a school community aim to be champions for looked after children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we as school have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development.

Our aims to support Looked after Children

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Closing the gap - Bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line to those of their peers.
- Making sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identifying our schools' role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care.
- Asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- All settings are required to have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked after Children who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, natural parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to compete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the school and with other agencies.

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – See Statutory regulations from September 2009

Designated teacher needs to be:

A qualified teacher or head teacher

A person who has been doing the role for at least six months and must be taking active steps to becoming a qualified teacher

At Uplands Junior School the Headteacher – Mrs Webster-Smith is the designated teacher.

- Maintain a register of all looked after children
This will include a record of:
 - The contact person for COPE (Darren Martindale)
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 - Type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential, adoptive.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number
- Ensure statutory documentation is kept up to date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability i.e. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

“The PEP is a record of what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to fulfil their potential.” (*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children DCSF March 2010*)

- Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns. E.g. name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
- Share Child Protection / disability information if appropriate (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information)
- Relevant health information
- Baseline information and all test results.
- Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.
- The child is entitled to decide who attends their Children in Care Statutory Reviews (6 monthly); if school do not attend they need to submit a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their personal education plan.

“The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which secures good basic skills, stretches aspirations and builds life chances.” (*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children DCSF March 2010*)

- Participate in appropriate designated teacher training and joint agency training.
- If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care, contact and advice should be sought from Education Safeguarding team and Single Central Referral Unit

GOVERNORS – what every Designated Governor for LAC should know

Number of LAC on school roll

Number of LAC with up to date PEPs

Overall attainment of LAC in the school / performance compared to peers

Number of LAC with SEN and statements

Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of LAC

Number of LAC who have been excluded in previous 12 months

How LA supports educational achievement of LAC

- Governing body should ensure the DT has opportunity to attend training. School staff and governors are aware of the DCSF Statutory guidance March 2010
- Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004
- There is a dedicated Governor to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its looked after children as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children
- Take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Looked after Children attending the school
- Designated teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the head teacher

Whole school approach:

- The school celebrates the achievements of Looked after Children.
- Teachers should have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition
- The young person will need to have a special, trusted adult in school who is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- For young Looked after Children, there should be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the child from school
- All teachers within the school are made aware of the needs of Looked after Children and actively promote their best interests
- Adults in school will need to be sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Looked after Children.
- The designated teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained
- Support the engagement of Looked after Children in out of school hours learning
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance
- Teachers can help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis
- Staff are aware that being looked after has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given
- Teachers can be aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem
- Teachers need to be aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers
- Looked after Children are given access to Pupil Premium (£1900 per year) in school to support English and Maths.

Special Educational needs / Gifted and talented:

- Any special educational needs / Gifted and talented abilities are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Looked after Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this
- Contact needs to be made with the COPE as soon as concerns are raised
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need, then ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews; dates can be obtained from the social worker.

Admissions and transitions:

- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- We will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience
- Prioritise Looked after Children within schools own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Looked after Children.
- Adhere to Wolverhampton Council School Admission protocol

Attendance:

- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established
- Inform Education Welfare service / Social Worker / COPE if any concerns about attendance
- Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern
- If a child is on a protection plan, ensure Social worker and Carer are contacted if child is absent from school

Exclusion:

- Identify any Looked after Children who is at risk of exclusion and contact COPE, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Looked after Children missing days from school
- Ensure in the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the exclusion, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education.
- Make sure in the event of any exclusion, contact is made with COPE with details of the exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made.

Multi-agency liaison:

- Designated teacher will need to liaise closely with carers, birth parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared
- There should be a well planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the young person's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented
- There needs to be clear understanding about the role and responsibility of school staff in relation to the young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved
- School staff will need to share positive perceptions and high expectations of the young person with other professionals but especially with the young person

- The school should be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the natural parents
- Designated teachers should ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations
- Encourage each looked after child to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning
- Support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making

Personal education plans (PEPs):

“The PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the school.”(*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children DCSF March 2010*)

- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (Early years to Yr11+) for each child to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child’s Care Plan held by the Social Worker, and form part of any other school plan. E.g. Statement, New EHC plan (Sept 2014) Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme, Pathway Plan at Post 16
- Contribute to the process whereby all Looked after Children have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 10 days of starting the school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child’s Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (IEP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need)
- Following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that any Looked after Children has the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set
- Support referrals for the Personal Education Allowance (PEA) for CIC who are at risk of underachieving academically through discussions at PEP meetings
- Hold a PEP meeting for every statutory care review, involving the Social worker, foster carers, young person and parent if appropriate (*See brief PEP Guidance on website*)

Raising standards of achievement: www.education.gov.uk (as of May 2010)

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
DCSF March 2010

Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children)
DCSF 2009

Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in primary schools
DCSF 2009

Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in secondary schools
DCSF 2009

Special Educational Needs
SEN Code of Practice 2014

The head teacher or designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

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