

# Hawthorn Primary School Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

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*‘Cultivating the futures of our  
children’*

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National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination 2017

Member of Hawthorn Primary School's Senior Leadership Team

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### **1. Our aims as a school community are that:**

- we nurture and develop the whole child.
- we respect children's starting points and remove ceilings from their learning.
- we value the progress and effort of the individual.
- we promote an inclusive and respectful school community where all children's needs are recognised and supported.
- independence is promoted and underpinned by adult support and a resilience building approach.
- the importance of teamwork between home and school are valued and nurtured with the best outcomes for the child at the heart of all that we do.
- children leave Hawthorn with the practical life skills they need to be able to be part of the community they live in.

### **This policy aims to:**

- Set out how our school will support and make provision for pupils who are looked after to access the full curriculum and pastoral support in order to achieve aspirational targets.
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEN.

## **2. Legislative Compliance**

This policy complies with the following:

- The Children's Act 1989
- The Child and Young Persons Act 2008

This policy is based on The Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked after children and previously looked after children.

### **3. Definitions**

#### **Looked After Children (LAC)**

At Hawthorn Primary School we recognise 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.

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

#### **Accommodated**

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.

#### **Previously - Looked After Children (PLAC) 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).

LAC reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for LAC until they are 16 years old

#### **4. Characteristics of LAC**

We recognise that LAC may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others.
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private.

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. At Hawthorn Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- Personal Education Plans (PEP) for all Looked After Children.
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group.

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **Role and responsibilities of Designated Teacher for LAC**

The Designated Teacher should:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan(PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings
- ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher)
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors

- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded
- ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA

### **Roles and responsibilities of all staff**

- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children

### **Roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body**

The governing body of this school will:

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;

- liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons)

## **6. Looked After Children Targets and Reviews**

Three times a year school, home and social care along with any other relevant professionals meet to set educational targets. This is called a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The process is detailed below:

- A date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Both school and social care access the PEP format, generally online using EPEP in advance of the meeting.
- PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
- A date is set for the next pep meeting where targets will be reviewed and set.
- The PEP is sent electronically to the Local Authority Virtual School's team who quality assure the PEP.

When a LAC first joins the school or is made a LAC, the first PEP must be completed within 10 days of the start date or the date of the child becoming a LAC. The PEP is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.

Linked Policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEN Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The school will champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Further information can be found here:

[Promoting the Education of LAC and PLAC Children](#)

[North Northants Virtual School](#)

[Northampton Children's Trust](#)