

**TATWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER POLICY**

Ratified by the Full Board of Governors: 25 May 2017

Date of Next Review: March 2019

Rationale

- Many Children Looked After have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. Many children who are looked after will have experienced one or more changes of school. Some children may be placed with foster carers some significant distance from school and have to travel for long periods each day. The gaps in their learning – and in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences – are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.
- For many Children Looked After, school life can be challenging. They may find it harder to trust adults; their educational experience may have been disrupted; their capacity to build and maintain relationships and friendships may be impaired.
- A supportive school can be the key to their success and can enhance their life chances. School can provide stability, a safe place in a turbulent world, an opportunity to achieve, be successful and excel and a route towards a more successful future
- For our children looked after, this school aims to provide positive experiences and to offer stability, safety, continuity, and individual care and attention.

Objectives of the Policy

To fulfil our school's role as corporate parents by:

- promoting the educational achievement of Children Looked After
- promoting the educational attainment of Children Looked After
- promoting the welfare of Children Looked After
- ensuring that Children Looked After stay safe, are healthy, enjoy and achieve, are involved and acquire economic wellbeing

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Headteacher and Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will ensure the provision/outcomes for Children Looked After are specifically recorded in:

- SEF
- Appropriate School Policies and Procedures
- Specific Reports progress and attainment results; attendance; behaviour, sanctions, exclusions; student voice.

The Headteacher and Leadership team will also:

- support the Designated Teacher in the production of annual reports on the provision for, and progress of, Children Looked After to the Governing Body
- monitor, with the Governing Body, the role of the Designated Teacher
- ensure staff are aware that the provision to support Children Looked After is a key school priority
- give the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After the time and facilities to carry out their job description and support them at all times in their work
- show a personal interest and involvement in Children Looked After in the school

- challenge negative stereotypes of Children Looked After if they exist and insist on the highest expectations, especially in terms of Children Looked After achieving their full potential
- provide Continuing Professional Development for staff on issues pertaining to Children Looked After and support the Designated Teacher so that she can attend regular training
- provide information to the school's leadership partner regarding the progress of Children Looked After on the school's roll
- attend or provide information for the Children Looked After Review meetings and for the Personal Education Plan meeting.
- Liaise regularly with the Child Looked After's Social Worker and possibly with the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

- The Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- appoint a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After who has appropriate seniority, professional experience and status to provide leadership, training, information and advice to others
- receive reports about provision for Children Looked After – not specific individuals
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support to fulfil his/her role
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of Children Looked After

- The Designated Teacher

The Role of the Designated Teacher within the School

The Designated Teacher will:

- promote the educational achievement of every Child Looked After on the school's role
- provide strategic leadership across the school to ensure that all staff understand and respond positively and with sensitivity to the individual needs of Children Looked After
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put Children Looked After at a disadvantage
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support Children Looked After's learning. Particular account should be taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what he or she can achieve
- promote a culture in which Children Looked After believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education
- promote a culture in which Children Looked After are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- lead the process of individual target setting and tracking of the progress made by Children Looked After – this will form part of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and form the basis for discussion at the 6 monthly PEP review meetings and Child Looked After reviews.
- produce annual reports on the provision for, and progress of, Children Looked After to the Governing Body
- be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are Looked After
- make sure the school makes full use of Assessment for Learning approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of Children Looked After and help them and their

teachers understand where they are in their learning, social and emotional needs, where they need to go and how to get there

- make sure that Children Looked After are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and that they have access to academic focussed study
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary
- ensure that systems are in place that enable children to have an opportunity to contribute to their PEP and understand what the plan means for them
- ensure that appropriate staff attend the PEP meeting
- ensure that the PEP is up-to-date and made available for the child's statutory care plan review
- contribute to the decision making about the use of the Pupil Premium
- prevent, wherever possible, the exclusion of a Children Looked After
- maintain a register of Children Looked After
- keep all relevant education and care information about Children Looked After up to date

- ensure school procedures for welcoming pupils new to the school are followed when a Children Looked After joins the school, particularly as a mid-year admission
- promote the involvement of Children Looked After in extra-curricular activities both during and after the school day
- Liaise with the Child's Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) as and when appropriate.

The Relationship of the Designated Teacher to others beyond the School

The Designated Teacher will:

- be a central point of initial contact for others beyond the school
- ensure that arrangements are in place within the school to facilitate effective co-operation with other professionals, especially the Virtual School Head (or equivalent)
- report to the Virtual School on the progress, targets, achievements and levels of attainment of Children Looked After
- work closely with the Children Looked After carers and promote good home-school links. Also to liaise with birth parents as and when appropriate.
- ensure school policies in relation to, for example, time-keeping and attendance, homework diaries and parents' evenings are communicated to carers and social workers and, where appropriate, birth parents
- ensure that the Children Looked After's teachers know the most appropriate person to contact when necessary eg for permission slips for school trips
- provide advice about the likely impact of disrupting the child's education if changes of care placement occur
- ensure education records are received/passed on if Children Looked After transfer school and support the transition process
- be involved in any discussion related to decisions about potential exclusions of Children Looked After
- make sure that the Local Authority which looks after the child and the child's carers are involved in any discussion/decision about exclusion

Training

The Designated Teacher will:

- develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training/networking events
- disseminate information to school staff as appropriate

- attend training provided locally, regionally or nationally

- All Staff/the Whole School

All staff will be aware of Children Looked After in their classes and give them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision and positive discrimination whilst preserving confidentiality and showing sensitivity and understanding.

They will help Children Looked After to achieve by:

- having high expectations of Children Looked After's involvement in learning and educational progress
- being aware of the social, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families
- understanding the reasons which may be behind a Child Looked After's behaviour and why he/she may need more support than other children. Do not, however, allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving
- understanding how important it is to see Children Looked After as individuals rather than as a homogenous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers
- appreciating the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's Looked After status
- appreciating the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers, birth parents (if appropriate) and, depending upon age, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help the child achieve his or her potential
- having the level of understanding needed of the role of social workers and how education and the PEP fit into the wider care planning duties of the local authority
- being aware that, for many Children Looked After, bullying is an issue; ensuring that the school's anti-bullying policy operates
- considering how extra academic and pastoral support can be provided for Children Looked After if it is needed
- ensuring that Children Looked After have every opportunity to participate fully in the national curriculum, examinations, extra-curricular activities and additional educational support
- ensuring there is sensitivity to the background of Children Looked After in teaching, especially in work on families, belonging and/or family trees
- respecting the confidentiality of Children Looked After and ensure that any information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis
- ensuring that behaviour management policies recognise and make suitable provision for the needs and difficulties of Children Looked After
- taking appropriate action as soon as there may be any problems with behaviour or attendance
- involving appropriate carers/parents in home/school arrangements
- A Child Looked After's educational progress is particularly scrutinised in regular data/assessment checks and reported to governors at FGB.
- ensuring that any Children Looked After who may have learning difficulties are appropriately supported/assessed/resourced
- have training where necessary

Links with other policies

School policies

Children Looked After should be treated within the guidelines of the school Behaviour and SEN Policy.

National policy/statutory guidance

- [Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools - DCSF 2009](#)
- [The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children - DCSF 2009](#)
- [Promoting the educational achievement of looked after children: statutory guidance for local authorities - DCSF 2010](#)
- [Department for Education website](#)
- [Pupil Premium information](#)

Somerset Guidance

[Complaints Guidance for Children in Care](#)

[Children in Care Somerset](#)

The school's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children Looked After is based on the following principles:

- Fully understand the impact that trauma and loss can have on a child's social, emotional and cognitive development
- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion by challenging and changing attitudes of the school community
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with birth parents, carers, social workers and other professionals

Monitoring and Review

The designated teacher and governing body will keep the working of this policy under review.

Definition

Children Looked After can be –

[Section 20 \(The Children Act 1989\) - Voluntarily Accommodated.](#)

This means that the child/young person is looked after on a voluntarily basis with the signed agreement of those with parental responsibility. Parents retain their parental responsibility. The Local Authority do not hold parental responsibility for the child. There are no legal orders in place. Permission required in important decisions can only be given by parents. However, there should be as signed agreement between the Local Authority (LA) and the parents about day to day care arrangements and other important decisions such as emergency medical treatment (Delegation of Authority). Parents must still be fully consulted in all decision making in relation to the Child/ Children Looked After.

[Section 31 \(The Children Act 1989\) – Care Order](#)

This means that there is a court order in place which grants the Local Authority parental responsibility for the child. However, the parents also retain parental responsibility. Therefore, parental responsibility is shared by the Local Authority and parents. Best practice would dictate that the Local Authority should continue to consult with the parents as appropriate in any important decision in relation to the child. It is

advisable for those involved with the case to check any requests made by the parents with the Social Worker.

Section 38 (The Children Act 1989)– Interim Care Order

This means that the child is subject to ongoing court proceedings and assessments. The court has granted the Local Authority parental responsibility but this is only on an interim basis. The parents' continue to hold parental responsibility for the child.

Special Guardianship – (Sec 14 The Children Act 1989)

A Special Guardianship Order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'Special Guardian'. This order does not end the parental responsibility of the birth parents in relation to the child. However, this order grants the 'Special Guardian/s' parental responsibility for the child. The Special Guardians' parental responsibility can be exercised to the exclusion of any other person with parental responsibility, apart from another Special Guardian. The Special Guardian has responsibility for day to day decisions relating to a child's care and upbringing. This order allows a Special Guardian to remove a child from the UK for up to three months without the consent of others with parental responsibility or the leave of the court. Special Guardianship can give the child security and a long-term placement. It may also help to give the young person links to their birth parents too if appropriate. The Local Authority do not hold parental responsibility for children looked after by Special Guardian's. The role of the Local Authority will usually cease upon a Special Guardianship order being made.

Private Fostering

A child living in private fostering arrangement is not a 'child looked after'. Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 is cared for by someone who is not their parent. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer for 28 days or more. In order to ensure all children are safe, all parents and private foster carers must notify the Local Authority of this arrangement. If the school become aware that a child is privately fostered checks should be undertaken with the Local Authority to ensure that the private fostering team is aware of this private foster arrangement.

Types of Placement for Children Looked After

Children who are Looked After may be living with foster carers, with members of their extended family who have been approved as foster carers, or with their own parents under the Placement with Parents Regulations or in residential care.