

CROSSLEY STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (PLAC)

Definition

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, Looked After Children (LAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

School Commitment

Crossley Street Primary School recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorse the Leeds City Council policy and welcomes LAC who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Leeds.

Our school recognises that 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children' may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. LAC and PLAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and our school is committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC and PLAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances.

Crossley Street Primary School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of LAC and PLAC in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broad education.

- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher (Carol Harvey) is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.
- Ensuring that the child is given regular, planned times to work with and talk to School's Learning Mentor.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC and PLAC and take appropriate action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations. Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC and PLAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Governing Body

- Ensure that all Governors, especially the Governor designated to LAC/PLAC children, is fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC. At Crossley Street Primary School this is Mrs. Angela Hynes
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC and PLAC are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 - ~The number of LAC and PLAC students on the school's roll (if any). Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - ~Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - ~The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

Designated Teacher

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be *“someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for LAC and PLAC assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”*

The Designated Teacher at Crossley Street Primary School is Mrs. Gemma Stanton.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC and PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.

- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.

Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all students.
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Have a clear understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC and PLAC say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams, Educational Psychologist, Health Services, CAMHS, EPOS and any other agencies as required to enable support for the child.

Admission arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

The school recognises that Looked After children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Looked After Children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Gemma Stanton

October 2023