



Wateringbury Primary School

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May 2021	New policy

Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

“Looked after children and young people are our children. We hold their future in our hands, and education is the key to that future.” (Education of Young People in Public Care, DfEE 2000)

In Kent, we will give looked after children and young people every opportunity to fulfill their potential and build a bright and successful future, and will provide them with full time education in a mainstream school where possible. Achieving this requires a holistic, whole-authority approach, which recognises that children and young people are more likely to succeed if they have physical and emotional wellbeing, a stable home and school environment and effective channels of communication, support and encouragement.

The staff & governors at Waterringbury Primary School recognise that, when compared with their peers, nationally there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care. As a result we are committed to implementing the principles and best practice guidelines outlined in current government policy and are committed to ensuring staff are able to effectively carry out their responsibilities as outlined below.

Definition ‘Looked After Children’ Under the 1989 Children’s Act, a child is considered ‘Looked After’ by a local authority or LAC if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Local Authority (LA).

These children may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority, but living in ours. Children who are ‘Looked after’ fall within one of four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘accommodated’ by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act. As a result they may live in foster care, in a children’s home or in a residential school.
- Children who are the subject of a care order, (section 31) or interim care order, (section 38) The term ‘in care’ refers only to children who are subject to a care order by courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989. As a result they may be living with foster carers, in a children’s home, in a residential school or with relatives.
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection, (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the care of the LA or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

Aims

At Waterringbury Primary School, we aim to:

- Support ‘Looked After Children’ and give them access to the opportunities required in order to achieve their potential, enjoy learning, feel an active member of the school community and, as far as possible, take an active role in all school activities.

- Ensure school policies & procedures are followed for 'Looked After Children'.
 - Work with the 'Virtual Schools Kent' (VSK) and ensure that carers and social workers of LAC children are kept fully informed of their child's progress, attainment, behaviour, social integration and development as well as their general attitude to learning and wider school life.
 - Fulfil our schools' role as 'corporate' parent to promote and support the education of children who are 'Looked After'.

Offering Support

To support the achievement of 'Looked After Children', the school has a Designated Teacher for 'Looked After children'.

At Watlingbury, this is The Deputy Head Mrs Anneka Osborne

The Designated Teacher's role includes:

- Ensuring Personal Education Plans, (PEPs) are in place and reviewed on a termly basis.
Whilst additional funding support, (Pupil Premium Plus funding) will continue until the child is 16 years old, the completion of a PEP will only continue until a child is no longer in the care of the LA or until an adoption order has been granted/finalised.)
- Welcoming new children to the school and ensuring a smooth induction for them as well as their carer, noting any specific requirements.
- Ensuring that a Personal Education Plan, (PEP) is completed as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and their carer in liaison with the social worker as well as with other relevant support workers/agencies. The PEP should be linked to outcomes of each child's Care Plan meetings as well as any EHCP plan, recommended SEN support arrangements or Pastoral Support Plan (PSP).
- Keeping PEPs and other records up to date and ensuring a summary report is prepared in advance of review meetings.
- Co-ordinating support for the child and liaising with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Making sure that, where required, children who are 'Looked After' are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements.
- Ensuring that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Ensuring confidentiality of all children and only sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Liaising with the Class Teacher, SENCO to support the child and family, as required, with school attendance.
- Where feasible, encouraging 'Looked After Children' to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Ensuring the speedy transfer of information and records between individuals and other relevant agencies, including a child's new school if and when they transfer.
- Liaising with the Virtual School on all aspects of a 'Looked After Child's' progress and current support arrangements.

Roles and responsibilities of all staff

All staff will:

- Ensure that any 'Looked After Child' is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Be familiar with this policy and respond appropriately to requests for information / documentation required in order to support the completion of PEPs and review meetings.
- Respond positively to any 'Looked After Child's' request to act as the 'named person' 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.
 - Work with the Designated Teacher to identify, plan, implement, deliver and review the impact of any required intervention and additional support arrangements required.
 - As with all children, have high aspirations and expectations for both their educational and personal achievement and work as part of a wider school team to help remove any potential barriers to learning as well as positively promote the general well-being and self-esteem of the child.

Roles and responsibilities of the governing body

The governing body of this school will:

- Nominate a school governor to support the Designated Teacher and ensure the needs of any 'Looked After Child' are understood by staff.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance relating to 'Looked After' children.
- Be aware of whether the school has any children who are 'Looked After' by the LA, (no names).
 - Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for 'Looked After' children and that they have been enabled to carry out their role and responsibilities in relation to supporting children who are classified as 'Looked After'.
 - Support the Designated Teacher and other staff to ensure the needs of each 'Looked After Child' are met.
- Ensure the nominated governor links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body. (N.B – For child protection and confidentiality reasons these reports should not include any names of individual children)
- Review the effective implementation of this policy on an annual basis.
- Support the LA in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of children who are 'Looked After' by an LA.
 - In partnership with the Headteacher, ensure that, through relevant training and development, the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills and knowledge required to fulfil this role effectively.

Confidentiality

To ensure the safety and well-being of a 'Looked After Child', information will be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information can be shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting and will only share this once agreed with the Head teacher, social worker, carer, child, (where appropriate) and other parties.

All staff in school are aware that complete confidentiality of any information relating to children should be maintained at all times. Training The Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Further information from the LA relating to supporting 'Looked After Children' can be found at:

<http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/>