

HIGH FIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Policy for the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. It also takes into account section 20 and section 20A of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008.

Definitions

Looked-after children (LAC) are registered pupils that are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

Previously looked-after children (PLAC) are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:
 - A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
 - A special guardianship order
 - An adoption order
- They appear to the governing board to have:
 - Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
 - Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Nationally, 'Looked After Children' (LAC) and 'Previously Looked After Children' (PLAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After children and Previously Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being, in line with Every Child Matters. The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

Helping Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Kent County Council and Kent schools. This policy takes account of:

- The County Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After (LAC).
- The Education (Admission of Children Looked After)(England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (*Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors*).
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children- Statutory Guidance on their roles and responsibilities. (February 2018)
- Promoting the education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children- Statutory Guidance for local authorities. (February 2018)

High Firs Primary School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children Looked After is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- 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 carers, social workers and other professionals.

Implications

As for all our pupils, High Firs Primary School is committed to helping every Looked After Child to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

The Governing Body of High Firs Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure a Designated Teacher for all Looked after Children is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for LAC and PLAC, in line with Kent's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for LAC and PLCA.

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of all LAC and PLAC when reviewing them:

- Oversubscription criteria.
- The School Code of Conduct.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Discipline Policy.
- Home School Agreement.
- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Policy on Racial Harassment.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

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

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER SCHOOL POLICY ATTACHMENTS

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEADTEACHER

- Identify a Designated Teacher for all 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 all LAC and PLAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of all LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used to good effect, for the benefit of all disadvantaged students and for the whole student body. This funding should not be assigned to individual students, but a cumulative amount to improve learning experiences and progress.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- High Firs has a nominated Governor for LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children Looked After.
- 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.

Our Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of LAC and PLAC, through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure LAC and PLAC achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- 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 Headteacher, 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:
 1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 3. Their SAT scores and other qualifications achieved, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.

4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

THE ROLE OF THE 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.”

Our designated teacher is: Rachael Ford

You can contact them by: office@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below. In light of new extension to duties it needs to be noted that the role of the Designated Teacher does not change but that the Designated Safeguarding Lead can seek advice from the Virtual School for children who have had, or ever had a social worker.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children ensuring a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan for that transition in consultation with the child’s social worker
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by working with VSHs and promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils’ matter and are prioritised.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities including extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as a source of advice for Staff and Governors about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children

- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately by having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- Ensure that each Looked After Child and Previously Looked After Child 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. *They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.*
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education
- 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.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- 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.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy. Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- To support each 'Child Looked After' to answer on-line questions which will support their understanding of their learning and feelings.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- 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 an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.

- Be aware that 60% of Children Looked After say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

Advice and support is available from Kent County Council's Children Looked After Education Adviser team. Advice and guidance can be found at:

<https://virtuelschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/>

Shared with Governors and staff: October 2024

Next review date – October 2027