



# Looked After Children Policy

| Date       | Review date | Comments  |
|------------|-------------|---|
| March 2022 | March 2023  | New policy in place.  |
| May 2023   | May 2025    | Reviewed - no process / procedure changes. Duplications removed and suspension included inline with update to policy. |
| May 2025   | May 2027    | Reviewed - no process / procedure changes.  |
|            |             |   |

**‘Be the best that you can be!’**

## 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.

Previously looked-after children are those who:

- are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or
- were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

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 set out in "Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities".

Hampton Primary Partnership is committed to providing a quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises that:

- Nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers.
- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are significantly more likely to have SEN than their peers. Of those with SEN, a significant proportion will have Education, Health and Care Plans. (*Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities, February 2018.*)
- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education. (*Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities, February 2018.*)

## AIMS

Our approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children is based on the following aims and principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated person is named, who will be responsible for all looked-after and previously looked-after children.

- All looked-after Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based 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 suspensions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- 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.
- To coordinate with the local authority's 'Virtual School's Head' to access support and training for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

### **Responsibility of the Executive Leadership Team**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children, 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 exclusion or suspension of looked-after and previously looked-after children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of looked-after and previously looked-after children to all parties involved.

## **Responsibility of the Governing Body**

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children: The Education (Admission of Looked After Children England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- 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 Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are recognised and met.

## **The role of the Designated Teacher**

- 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 and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs are identified and met.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- Ensure that each looked-after 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.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Coordinate any support for the looked-after and previously looked-after children that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.

- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage looked-after and previously looked-after children to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion or suspension.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be proactive 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.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of the latest developments and policies regarding Looked After Children.

#### **The responsibility of the all staff**

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

#### **Confidentiality**

Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

## **Record keeping and information sharing**

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of looked-after and previously looked-after children in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC/YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

## **Exclusions/Suspensions**

Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

## **Staff development and training**

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked After Children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

## **Support and resources**

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for looked-after and previously looked-after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

## **Home-school liaison**

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve their potential.

### **Admission arrangements**

We recognise that due to care arrangements, looked-after children 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).

### **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 and CAMHS.

### **Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement**

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability, personal circumstances or ability. At Hampton Primary Partnership we are committing to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to be the 'best they can be'.