



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

SANDON PRIMARY ACADEMY

Mrs R Beckett (Principal)

Review date: September 2024

Definition

The definition 'Looked After' is a term that refers to children who are in the care of the local authority either through a care order made by the court or a voluntary agreement with their parents. They may be looked after in a children's home, by foster carers or by other family members. All unaccompanied asylum seeking children are also looked after children.

The definition 'Previously Looked After' is a term that refers to a child who is no longer looked after by the local authority because they are subject to an adoption order, special guardianship or child arrangement order.

The Designated Teachers for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children in school are Kate Burrows and Lyndsay Colclough.

Sandon Primary Academy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. The trustees and the academy welcomes children who may be looked after by our local authority or those children whom live in our area but are under the care of another local authority.

Principles

Sandon Primary Academy encourages and supports the educational achievement of Looked After Children based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children and Previously Looked After Children.
- All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which will be completed and reviewed termly by the school, the child, the child's social worker and carers. The (PEP) will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require to meet these needs.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broad curriculum.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing-ensuring a holistic view of the child.
- Achieving stability and continuity for the child in school.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- 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.

Contextual Analysis

Within the academy 3% of the pupil population are a Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Child. The academy has nine Looked After Children, three of whom are looked after by a differing local authority to the one the school is located in. The academy supports nine Looked After Children who are in long term foster care placements; four of which are placed with family members. The academy also supports five Previously Looked After Children supported by special guardianship orders, residence orders and arrangement orders.

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 (LAC) are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, 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 to fulfil their potential and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our academy. Sandon Primary Academy recognises that LAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC 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. Sandon Primary Academy recognises that LAC may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or attachment difficulties and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. Sandon Primary Academy believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which all LAC can be successful. We believe that this academy has a major part to play in ensuring that LAC are able to be happy, healthy, stay safe and achieve.

Responsibility of the Head teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC, whose role is set out below.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in the academy receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of the Trustees

- Ensure that all Trustees are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC: 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 academy has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC.
- Ensure the academy'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 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.

- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people every term.
- 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.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in the academy, including the person responsible for Child Protection.
- 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 academy life and encourage LAC to join in extracurricular activities.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties at the academy or are at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes educational setting – to a new setting.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored and reported to the local authority.
- Attend training as required to keep fully informed of the latest developments and policies regarding LAC.

The responsibility of all staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information and input into the (PEP) as requested by the Designated Teacher.
- Work to enable LAC to achieve stability and success within the academy.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC.
 - Ensure that non-attendance is promptly reported to the Designated Teacher.
 - Consistently implement and monitor the support strategies/ interventions agreed in the (PEP).

Admission arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC may enter the academy 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 academy recognises that LAC are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the academy's over subscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006). Please refer to the academy's admissions policy for more information.

Support and resources

Virtual school will allocate an amount of money each term to support the needs of all LAC. The Designated Teacher will be responsible for planning out the personal resources and support needed for each individual child at the termly (PEP) meetings in agreement with the child, carers, social workers and all other relevant parties.

The Trustees will ensure that the academy allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

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 LAC. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include attachment disorders, EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs. The school SENCo will be informed of those LAC who have particular learning needs and will work with them appropriately following the graduated approach. Please refer to the academy's SEND policy.

Confidentiality

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

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children and Young People in the academy 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 LAC starting at the academy or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC. 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 LAC 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.

Home-school liaison

The academy 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 LAC to achieve their potential. Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working. These meetings are in addition to the daily open door policy that the academy operates for parents/carers and the daily communication maintained in children's diaries.

Links with other agencies

The academy recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the LAC including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

Exclusions

Sandon Primary Academy recognises that LAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion, the academy 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 LAC to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The LAC Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child. 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 academy's Behaviour Policy for more information.