

## **ST ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL – DENTON POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (1.2)**

### **BACKGROUND**

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. As recently as 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care and draw attention to:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- Lack of involvement in extra curricular activities.
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.
- Underachievement in further and higher education.

St Anne's School recognises that it is essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children.

Tameside Local Authority have produced guidelines (Appendix 1).

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children
- To support the personal and social development of looked after children

### **Definition of Looked After Children**

The Children Act of 1989 introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to care orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority.

Both these groups are said to be 'looked after' by the local authority.

Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days in one year. It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with

- foster carers
- in a children's home
- in a residential school
- with relatives
- with parents - under the supervision of Health and Social Care (HSC)

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- in foster care
- in a children's home
- in a residential school
- with parents

## **Named Teacher for Looked After Children**

The named teachers for looked after children are currently the Inclusion co-ordinators, Ms Amy Mantel and Ms Sally Bean.

## **The Role of the Named Teacher and Headteacher**

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by 'looked after' children and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are looked after, and to promote the involvement of these children in school and extra curricular activities etc
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children being looked after, eg to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked after
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with education, carers and Health and Social Care (HSC) for reporting and recording absence from school and by acting to address these issues through early and positive intervention
- To work with individual children, possibly through a carer, to arrive at a statement about their circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan
- To ensure that each pupil has an Individual Education Plan
- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register if this is not the named teacher
- To co-ordinate education and Health and Social Care (HSC) review meetings, so that any Individual Educational Plans can inform the child's Care Plan
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to HSC's care planning meetings
- To be the named contact for colleagues in the Local Authority (LA) and HSC
- To report on the progress of all looked after children to the Local Authority
- To develop knowledge of HSC/LA procedures by attending training events as appropriate
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate
- To ensure the Pupil Premium funds are spent wisely for the holistic development of the child in consultation with the pupil and parents/carers

## **Named Governor**

The named governor is currently Brenda Moxon.

## **Role of Named Governor**

The named governor will report the following to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of looked after pupils in the school
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Pupil destinations if applicable
- Equal access through the school's policy and procedures for looked after children to:
  - (1) The National Curriculum
  - (2) Public Examinations if applicable
  - (3) Extra Curricular Activities
  - (4) Additional Educational Support

## **Responsibility for Looked After Children in School**

All teaching staff who are in contact with the children will be made aware that they are being looked after by the Local Authority. The headteacher is responsible for the transfer of this information and/or the named teacher for 'Looked After Children' within the school.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the child is being looked after only when directly involved in the teaching of the child.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Headteacher or the school's co-ordinator for 'Looked After Children'.

## **Admission Arrangements**

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school. A meeting will be held with the appropriate person eg carer/parent/Social Worker to complete base line information to inform the pupil's Individual Education Plan and clarify contact arrangements. A copy of the school's home school agreement will be given to the primary carer. An appropriate school induction will take place as is the case for all pupils at the school.

## **Involving the Child**

The child will be made aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

## **Communication with Other Agencies**

The named teacher will share information concerning the child's progress and circumstances to the relevant bodies as appropriate.

The school will ensure that a copy of all reports (eg end of year) are forwarded to the child's Social Worker in addition to, for example, the foster carer or residential Social Worker. Schools, the Local Authority and Social Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, eg to have an Annual Review of a Statement combined with a Statutory Care Review.

Social Care and Health, the Local Authority and schools will exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, eg if school is considering an exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

## **Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures**

Each looked after child will be given a Personal Education Plan. This will identify specific areas of concern and achievable targets.

Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)
- Behaviour
- Homework
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities
- Relationship to Care Plan
- Special Needs (if any)
- Development Needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations)
- Liaison will be undertaken with Education Welfare/Education Psychology/Social Care and Health, etc in the assessment and review processes as appropriate
- The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body

(LACPOLICY)

# Appendix 1

## Promoting The Achievement of Children and Young People in Care

**Local Authorities (LAs) have the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of every looked-after child (LAC). This involves ensuring a wide range of adults work together in order to ensure:**

- The child's learning needs (including their emotional and social development) are recognised, understood and met
- Expectations of the child's attainment are high
- The child's progress is regularly monitored and targets are set that enhance future learning and attainment
- The child's learning experience is consistent, with planned transitions
- The child develops high aspirations for their future learning.

**In order for this to happen, the following key adults all have an important role:**

- The Designated Teacher (DT) for LAC in the child's school
- All other school-based adults working with the child in school
- The Headteacher of Virtual School (HVS) and other Virtual School staff
- The child's social worker
- The child's carer

For some children, staff from specialised support services may also be needed to help the child achieve.

There are also implications for the work of other professionals e.g. in relation to the Local Authority, School Admissions, Education Welfare e.t.c., in ensuring the needs of all looked-after children are met.



**This handbook is designed to ensure that each of the key adults is clear about their responsibilities in meeting the needs of looked-after children from Tameside.**

*NB The information here is not exhaustive and all professionals should be aware of their responsibilities under any relevant legislation.*

**The School** is responsible for ensuring:

- the attainment and progress gap between looked-after children (LAC) and other children is closed
- a culture is developed of high aspirations amongst LAC
- LAC have access to high quality education
- effective policies are in place to support the education and success of LAC
- a Designated Teacher (DT) is appointed to champion the attainment of LAC and act as a source of advice and information on their needs<sup>1</sup>
- the Governing Body understands the importance of specific professional development for, as a minimum, the senior leadership team and DTs in supporting the achievement of LAC
- relevant staff understand how admission arrangements, the avoidance of exclusions, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support, curriculum planning, multi-agency work and the management of challenging behaviour can be best addressed to meet the educational needs of LAC
- the Headteacher of Virtual School (HVS) and social worker are involved in all decisions about any change in school placement<sup>2</sup>
- the school actively supports any change in placement through effective integration plans
- additional needs are assessed and additional support is provided to meet identified needs; acting on the advice of other agencies and giving time to implement and monitor strategies to support the child<sup>3</sup>
- as far as possible, the exclusion of any looked-after child is avoided<sup>4</sup>
- the HVS is informed about any concerns relating to the behaviour of a LAC
- an emergency Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting is arranged, inviting the HVS, social worker and any other relevant professional in the event of there being serious concerns about a LAC's education.

*Whilst the Designated Teacher will be instrumental in leading or contributing to many of the points above, they will also have specific responsibilities as outlined overleaf.*



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Contact TMBC – Virtual School for Looked After Children and Young People for:-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A – An introduction to LAC

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B – LAC and moving schools

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C – Addressing the SEN of LAC

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix D – School exclusions and LAC

**The Designated Teacher** is responsible for ensuring:

- they know the LAC on their roll well, understanding their needs and views
- a termly PEP<sup>5</sup> meeting is held for every looked-after child on their school roll. (Whilst the social worker will call the first PEP meeting after a child is taken into care or starts a new school, the DT will call subsequent meetings. *This will avoid delay when there are changes in social worker, enable meetings to be at times appropriate to school progress tracking points and allow better co-ordination with SEND reviews*).
- they lead on the development of the PEP and its use in school
- school staff implement any actions identified in the PEP effectively and without delay
- the PEP is fully completed and returned to the PEP-coordinator at the LA, with copies sent to the carer
- that information in the PEP and any Individual Education Plan (IEP) / Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) – previously a Statement of Special Educational Need - is co-ordinated so that children are not confused and targets are consistent.
- the PEP addresses any need for catch-up support and other effective intervention to raise attainment and accelerate progress.



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Contact TMBC Virtual School for Children and Young People for:-

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix E – Guidance on Personal Education Plans

**The Headteacher of Virtual School** is responsible for ensuring:

- an up-to-date roll is kept of looked-after children in schools and colleges
- an up-to-date record is kept of Designated Teachers in schools and colleges in the LA
- the attendance and progress of looked-after children are monitored and evaluated effectively
- Headteachers and DTs know when a LAC is on their roll
- schools and DTs understand their roles in relation to LAC
- all relevant adults understand their roles in relation to PEPs
- they are aware of the policies schools have in place to support LAC
- PEPs are high-quality and up-to-date for all LAC
- any actions required of them that are identified in the PEP are implemented effectively and without delay
- they report regularly on the attainment of LAC to the Corporate Parenting Group
- a culture is promoted that takes into account children's views about their education
- other professionals understand the importance of education for LAC
- there is an informed discussion about any changes in school placement
- they take primary responsibility for suitable education being provided for all LAC
- they work effectively with HVSs from other LAs to best meet the needs of LAC
- arrangements are in place to support looked-after children who are in custody
- training and advice is provided for schools, social workers, carers and LA staff
- arrangements are in place for the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus<sup>6</sup> payments for LAC.



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Contact TMBC Virtual School for Children and Young People for:-

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix F – Pupil Premium Plus funding



**The Social Worker** is responsible for ensuring:

- they inform the child's school immediately after s/he becomes a LAC
- they coordinate an initial PEP meeting to be held within 10 school days of a child becoming looked-after
- they call a PEP meeting for any child without a school place, involving the HVS and carer (and LA SEN staff when appropriate) to consider appropriate education placements / providers
- in the case of an emergency placement, that a suitable full time educational provision is secured within 20 school days
- the child's school is informed promptly of any significant event that might impact on the child's learning and behaviour in school (they may contact the school or request the carer to do this)
- they attend any PEP meeting called by the DT, whenever practical, and always read completed PEPs
- the child's educational needs identified in the PEP are met as part of their care planning
- care planning minimises any disruption to education and particularly between ages 14-18
- they have a good understanding of nationally expected attainment and progress in schools and the specific issues relating to LAC and educational barriers<sup>7</sup>
- PEPs are high-quality and up-to-date for all LAC on their caseload
- any actions required of them that are identified in the PEP are implemented effectively and without delay
- they act on changes required to meet the LAC's educational needs, as identified by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- they continue to work with the school between statutory reviews of Care Plans to ensure up-to-date information is considered at reviews chaired by the IRO
- the HVS and IRO is involved in any decision about change in school placement
- they understand the rights and needs of LAC in relation to school admissions, SEND, attendance, exclusions and exam options
- they alert the IRO promptly about any significant changes or concerns relating to a LAC's educational provision or progress



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Contact TMBC Virtual School for Children and Young People for:-

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix G – LAC, education and expectations

**The Carer (including Care Home Staff)** is responsible for ensuring:

- they have a good understanding of nationally expected attainment and progress in schools and the specific issues relating to LAC and educational barriers
- they demonstrate the prioritisation of the educational achievement of children in their care
- they promote positive educational and recreational activities
- they support children in being aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- the HVS and social worker are involved in any decisions about change in school placement.



**The Local Authority** is responsible for ensuring:

- the attainment and progress gap is closed between looked-after children and other children
- a culture of high aspirations is created amongst looked-after children
- looked-after children have access to high quality education
- LAC are exempted from Fair Access Protocols (understanding they are 'excepted pupils' in relation to infant class size and delay in accessing education is not tolerated, using powers of direction when required)
- the Children in Care Council (CiCC) regularly addresses educational issues and responds effectively
- the IRO raises any concerns about a LAC's education or PEP with the social worker and HVS.



***For all professionals, it is essential to have due regard for requirements relating to safeguarding, equality, confidentiality and data protection.***