

Date to be reviewed: January 2022

Policy for Looked - After Children and Previously Looked-After Children at Croyland Primary School

Responsible persons:

- Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DT): Lisa Carroll
- Designated member of staff for Previously Looked After Children (P)LAC: Ruth Crawford
- Designated Governor for the monitoring of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children at Croyland :Tracy Elliot
- Headteacher : Lucy Deakin

Introduction:

To fulfil our school's role as 'corporate parents', we recognise that we have a special duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children and, to prepare them for further school and placement transitions and, adolescence.

All Staff at Croyland Primary School are aware of their role and responsibilities for looked-after and previously looked-after children but also the many barriers that can make it difficult for these children to achieve their potential.

All staff are fully committed to supporting them as best we can. We evaluate our provision by simply asking this question: *'Would this be good enough for my child?'*

Core documents and reference resources P (LAC):

Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE, February 2018)

The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (DfE, February 2018).

The Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years: Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (DfE, 2015).

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy:

- a *'looked-after child'* is one who is looked-after by a local authority within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- a *'previously looked-after child'* is one who is no longer looked-after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order (which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live

with any person) or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales (a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if they are in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society).

Looked-after children (LAC):

Our governing body designates a member of staff (the designated teacher) to lead upon and promote the educational achievement of LAC registered pupils at our school. The designated teacher (DT) is a qualified teacher who has undertaken appropriate training (e.g. has a good knowledge of the needs of LAC; including special educational needs and social, emotional and mental health support). They are also recognised for their superb organisation and communication skills.

Previously looked-after children (PLAC):

Our governing body also designates a member of staff to lead upon and promote the wellbeing of PLAC registered pupils at our school. They have also undertaken appropriate training and have a deep knowledge and understanding of social, emotional and mental health needs.

Where a child is identified as PLAC, the parent will be asked for the appropriate paper work which confirms their PLAC status.

For children adopted outside England and Wales, in order to receive this status, the child must have been looked-after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, the designated teachers will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, discussion will be had regarding eligibility with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to agree our approach.

The role of the Governing Body:

Our governing body, through reporting by the DT, holds the school to account on how it supports its (P) LAC, including how PPP is used to support their individual needs.

Issues that are considered and monitored by the DT and reported to the lead Governor for (P) LAC ensure;

- there are no unintended barriers to the admission of (P) LAC either at normal transition or any other point of the school year
- there are no issues arising as a result of the number of (P) LAC on roll at the school and the number of local authorities which are involved

In addition to the above, the information included in the report includes:

- Whether (P) LAC have made the expected or better levels of progress (educational, social and emotional) over the past twelve months in line with their peers
- Whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for (P) LAC is different to that of other children at the school

- (for LAC) whether the school's policies are sensitive to their needs (e.g. in accessing out of school hours learning, respecting the children's wishes and feelings about their care status or generally meeting their needs as identified in their personal education plans)
- Whether any (P) LAC are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met
- Whether any (P) LAC face additional safeguarding challenges of which the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should be aware
- Whether any (P) LAC have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level
- Whether any (P) LAC have mental health needs and whether those needs are being identified and met
- Whether the school's behaviour management policy is sufficiently flexible to respond to challenging behaviour in the most effective way for (P) LAC
- How the teaching and learning needs of (P) LAC are reflected in school policies, in particular in relation to interventions and resources
- What the impact is of any of our school's policies (e.g. on charging for educational visits and extended school activities) on (P) LAC
- What impact Pupil Premium / Pupil Premium Plus (PP / PPP) has in supporting the educational achievement

The role of the designated teacher/staff member for supporting LAC/ (P) LAC at CPS:

At Croyland Primary School, the DT for LAC and (P) LAC form a team who work closely together to meet the needs of this potentially very vulnerable group of pupils.

Together the team:

- are advocates for looked-after children within the school
- know all the looked-after children within the school, including those in care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- work with all Virtual Schools in the appropriate authorities to promote the education of (P) LAC and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every (P) LAC matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how (P) LAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:
 - are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour

- understand how important it is to see (P) LAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their (P) LAC status
- appreciate the central importance of LAC PEPs in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child
- are a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are (P) LAC
- understand and implements Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of (P) LAC, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there
- (for PLAC), understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school
- Following the completion of termly PEP meetings (using ePEP online), a member of the team will share the educational targets with the child to ensure they have an opportunity to achieve them

Specific responsibilities for looked-after children:

Our (P) LAC Team also play a direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of individual children. In their collaboration with the many professionals involved with a (P) LAC, they ensure that the systems and practices in our school:

- do not unintentionally put (P) LAC at a disadvantage
- provide effective induction and support for (P) LAC and their families when starting school, are new to the school and are new to care
- take into account the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what they can achieve
- identify any (P) LAC as gifted and talented and outline how those needs are being met
- identify any (P) LAC who face additional safeguarding challenges of which the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should be aware of
- identify any (P) LAC that have special educational needs (SEN) and outline how those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level
- identify any (P) LAC have mental health needs and outline those needs are being met
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of LAC PEPs within school in partnership with others as necessary

- incorporate communication and collaboration between the DT, DSL and a child's social worker to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding (P) LAC are quickly and effectively responded to
- do not include any barriers to (P) LAC accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for LAC to attend meetings)
- ensure that the (P) LAC have a named person in school who they can talk to and trust – this will usually be someone working with the class or any appropriate adult with whom the child has formed a relationship with

Specific responsibilities for Post Looked after Children:

When supporting a post looked after child, a member of the (P) LAC team will contact the Virtual School for information and advice on meeting the needs of this child, if they are new to Croyland Primary School.

Our (P) LAC team fully involves parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education and their individual needs.

It is their responsibility to ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of vision and ethos of our school and the school's approach to the curriculum as well as how their child can be additionally supported within the home. This responsibility is undertaken alongside the child's class teacher and any other member of staff employed to support the child.

Assessment of Need:

The SEN Code of Practice (2015) recognises that around 70% of looked-after children have special educational needs. Croyland Primary School ensures that all newly admitted looked-after children have an assessment of their educational need once settled and stable within their home and school placement.

Voice of the child:

Listening to the voice of (P) LAC is a vital part to successfully understand their needs and make a successful plan to support them. To enable this, our (P) LAC team ensures that:

- time is made available within the team to get to know the child
- support is provided when a child is upset or angry and time is given to listen to them when they need help
- the provision for the child is reviewed based on their voice and needs
- A strong partnership is made between the school, VS/social worker, and carer

At Croyland Primary School, 'corporate parents' all school staff are expected to:

- positively promote the self-esteem of (P) LAC
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of (P) LAC

- keep the (P) LAC team informed about the progress of a of (P) LAC as well as any difficulties that the child may be experiencing
- respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEP and review meetings
- keep appropriate and necessary records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the (P) LAC team

The Personal Education Plan: Expectation and Practice -

The Personal Education Plan or PEP is a record of how professionals around the looked after child will support their educational outcomes and achievement. It is developed and reviewed termly with the designated teacher, young person, social worker, carer and virtual school

PEP's can improve educational outcomes for the named child by helping everyone gain a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet the child's educational needs and how that will be provided.

Social workers should not take decisions about a looked after child's education without reviewing the PEP in consultation with the school, child, carer, parent (if appropriate), VS and the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

The school and local authority for the looked after child have a shared responsibility for the PEP. In practice, this means that the DT, VSH and allocated social worker work together to develop the PEP, taking account of the child's views. The Designated Teacher is then responsible for leading on the development and implementation of the PEP within the school.

When a child on the school's roll becomes looked after, the Local Authority which looks after him or her must ensure that the Designated Teacher is notified and receives a basic PEP.

If a child has been looked after for some time, the PEP should also include information about educational progress and how s/he learns best.

At Croyland Primary School, when a child joins the school either at the beginning of, or during, the school year, the designated teacher ensures his or her specific educational and developmental needs are accurately and comprehensively assessed without delay. This assessment of needs forms the basis for the development or review and refinement of the PEP. The PEP must be a living document. Through their time in school, The DT, class teacher, subject teachers, inclusion Leader and Head Teacher contribute to the information recorded within the PEP, as necessary.

PEP's should be developed and reviewed through a meeting attended by the allocated social worker, the Designated Teacher, the child, carers, and where possible, a representative from the Virtual School.

When a child becomes looked after, the child's social worker should liaise with our DT to ensure that PEP is initiated within 10 working days (the PEP meeting will be held prior to the first LAC Review). The timings are overseen by our DT.

Unaccompanied asylum seekers or refugee children are entitled to the same local authority support to promote their educational outcomes as any other LAC.

Our DT plays a key role in making sure the PEP is effective in supporting everyone to help the child make good educational progress. PEPs record:

- developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences
- short and long-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child (and carer where appropriate)
- planned actions, including milestones on homework, extra tuition and study support, that the school and others will take to promote the educational achievement of the child, based on an assessment of their educational needs
- the child's academic progress and details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to ensure PEP targets are met
- detail any additional support which will happen, or is already happening (e.g. action to support special educational needs involving the SENCO, educational psychologist, or local authority education services)
- information on what will happen or is already happening to identify and support any mental health needs relevant to the child's education
- the child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective
- the child's academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning activities (e.g. sporting, personal development)
- information which helps all who are supporting the child's educational achievement to understand what works for them, helping to substitute for the role that parents might otherwise provide
- accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen

Transfer of PEPs

The DT is fundamental to helping looked after children make a smooth transition to their next school. This includes the speedy transfer of the child's school records to a new school and ensuring the child's PEP is up to date.

Additional Information: Language that carers



The A-Z of using the appropriate language when talking about children in care.

https://www.tactcare.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/03/TACT-Language-that-cares-2019_online.pdf

This information came from a document that focuses on the voice of those children and young people who are in, have come through the care system.

We need to use this preferred language in communication with our looked after pupils.

B – Birth/Biological parents

We prefer: parents, family, mum or tummy mum, dad

- You should ask each child individually what they like calling their family members and share this with the appropriate and necessary staff members
- The words can also be excluding and disadvantageous to birth parent and it is important for these to be considered as well

C – Care leaver

We prefer: care experienced adult

- “Care” can mean anything as it has a wide definition, “care experienced” is preferred

C – Care plan

We prefer: future plan, my plan

- “Care” is overused and some children feel it is too common and would rather not hear it

C – Challenging behaviour

We prefer: having trouble coping, difficult thoughts

C – Contact

We prefer: making plans to see our family, family meet up time

- “Seeing family” seems more “normal” than “contact”

D – Designated teacher

We prefer: teacher

- “Saying “a teacher you can talk to” is less obvious than “designated” teacher which can make a child feel like they stand out

D – Difficult to place

We prefer: can't find a home good enough

- “Difficult to place” makes it sound like it's the child's fault

F – Foster carer

We prefer: my family, foster, mum, foster dad, my new family

- Children use different words in different contexts, always check with the child which term they want to be used

H – High aspirations

We prefer: good choices

I – In care

We prefer: another home away from home, living with a different family in a different home

L – LAC review

We prefer: my meeting, my review meeting, (child's name) review

- It is the child's meeting to talk about what is happening and what is good and bad

L – LAC visit

We prefer: home visit, catch up, (child's name) visit

L – LAC/foster child

We prefer: call children by their names, young people or children

- Every child is looked after so there is no need to make specific children stand out
- The acronym LAC can sound to the child like they are "lacking" in something

M – Moving placements

We prefer: moving to a new house/home, a new chapter, a fresh start

P – Peers

We prefer: friends

P – PEP

We prefer: school review, education meeting, education plan

- Some adults/staff use the work PEP openly in school to children and this lead to other classmates needing/wanting to have the meaning explained. It makes them stand out

P – Permanence

We prefer: my home without disruptions

P – Placement

We prefer: our home, home, my house, the house where I live

- "Placement" can sometimes sound like the child is being forced to live there
- This shouldn't be a word used for a home where a child has been living for a long time

- “Foster homes” is more a more preferable term than “placement”

R – Respite

We prefer: a break for children, day out, home away from home, stay over, time off for us

- “Respite” is too formal a term for young people
- Is can be seen as offensive as it means an escape or a break from something that is not enjoyable

S – Siblings

We prefer: our brothers and sisters, people who are related to me

- It is ok in written language but in spoken language it needs to be more informal and “normal”

S – Social worker

We prefer: one to one worker, someone who understands your family background

S – Special needs

We prefer: additionally supported

T – Therapy

We prefer: talking things through sessions

T – Transition

We prefer: preparing for change