

**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND
PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (PLAC) POLICY**

MAY 2024



Responsibility: Nicki Starling (Headteacher)

Approved by Governors: 07.05.2024

Review Date: May 2025

Governor responsible for LAC and PLAC: Vanessa Hamilton

Designated teacher for LAC and PLAC: Nicki Starling



Introduction

This policy is based on the model policy from Surrey's Virtual School. The virtual school is responsible for raising the educational standards of Surrey's Children in Care. At Dovers Green Infant School we would like to extend this policy to all children who have been in care at any point in their life, whether returned to natural parents, guardians or adopted. It is important to remember that these children have experienced separation and or trauma in their lives and need to be sensitively monitored and nurtured in order that they experience positive relationships and make at least expected progress.

Context

The terms 'Looked After Children' and 'Children in Care' are often used to define the same group of young people. In documents produced by Surrey's Virtual School the use of Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously looked After Children (PLAC) are the preferred terms.

When a child or young person is taken into Care by a local authority under a Court Order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority - who become their 'Corporate Parent'. Young people can also be in Care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a Section 20 status known as Accommodated) where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, and this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most looked after children will be living in foster homes but some may be in a residential children's home, semi-independent provider at Post-16, living with a relative or may be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). Children placed for adoption remain looked-after by the local authority until the Final Order.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is required for every Looked After Child and forms part of their overall Care Plan. A PEP should be initiated within ten working days and finalised a maximum of five working days later. PEPs should be reviewed at least once a term though more may be required if, for example, a child moves school. Children adopted from care (PLAC) do not require a PEP but it is good practice for parents to be asked whether they would like an EPAC (Education Plan for Adopted Children) to be written and regularly reviewed.

The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to 'achieve to and reach their full potential'. The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles;

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Prioritising
Education.

Maintaining high
expectations and
aspirations.

Inclusion –
changing and
challenging
attitudes.

Achieving
continuity and
stability.

Early
Intervention and
priority action.

Listening to the
child's voice at all
stages of care and
education planning.

Dovers Green believes that in Partnership with Surrey County Council, we have a special duty as Corporate Parents to safeguard and promote the education of looked-after (LAC) and previously looked after children (PLAC).

Our Aims

To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a steadfast belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

To support our looked-after and previously looked-after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve their potential and enjoy learning.

To fulfil our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our looked-after and previously looked-after children, by asking the question, '**Would this be good enough for my child?**'

Dovers Green School will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher (DT) for our looked-after and previously looked-after children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of our looked-after and previously looked-after children are prioritised at a school management level. The school governor will also support the Designated Teacher (DT) in their role as advocate and educational champion.
- Support the Designated Teacher (DT) in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend, at a minimum, statutory training provided by Surrey Virtual School (SVS) and external agencies.

The Designated Teacher (DT) will:

- Act as an advocate for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- To have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all looked-after and previously looked-after children in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- Maintain an up to date record of all looked-after children who are on the school role. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 - Type of Placement i.e. foster, respite, residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, email address and telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEN Code of Practice.
 - Baseline information and all test results.

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- Attendance figures.
- Exclusions.
- Ensure that there is a termly Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each child which includes appropriate targets, the child's views and above information. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. EHCP, SENS Support Arrangements etc. Each PEP meeting will be attended by either the DT or staff member with delegated responsibility with all possible sections of the PEP completed before the meeting date.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority. Where possible, the DT will attend the first PEP at the new school to assist transition and target setting.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when looked-after Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that an appropriate staff member attends Looked-After (LAC) Reviews and/or prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Swiftly intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- Be the named point of contact for staff seeking information on the educational, social, emotional and well-being needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate.
- Be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority children's services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners.
- Present regular reports including an Annual Report to Governors.
- Access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School (as a minimum requirement) and other external agencies. This includes ensuring all school staff are kept up to date with current legislation including DFE Statutory Guidance and its implication for the school in respect of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

Our Designated Teacher is Nicki Starling.

The nominated School Governor will:

- Ensure the appointment of a Designated Teacher in accordance with the Regulations (Designated Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team).
- Champion the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children by ensuring the designated teacher is given the appropriate level of support and training in order to fulfil their role.
- Monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of legal requirements and guidance on 'Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children.'
- Examine whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, including Pupil Premium Plus funding to maximise progress and attainment.
- Ensure that looked-after and previously looked-after children are placed on the school role without delay, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for care experienced children.

The nominated school governor is Vanessa Hamilton

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other policies.

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