



Grove School

Looked After Children Policy

October 2023

Mission statement:

“Enjoy, learn, achieve”

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The policy has been written with reference to DFE Promoting the education of looked after children, February 2018 and The Designated teacher for looked- after children, February 2018.

INTRODUCTION

The governing body of Grove is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DFE-00053 - 2018. The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- prioritising education;
- having high expectations;
- inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes;
- achieving continuity and stability;
- early intervention – priority action; and
- listening to children.

Grove school follows the statutory guidance in that there is:

- A Designated Teacher for the school: Ms C.Dowell
- Each Looked After Child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP)

This governing body is committed to ensuring that Designated Teachers and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

The designated teacher for Grove School is Ms C.Dowell

The deputy designated teacher for Grove school is Mr J Bentley

The Designated Teacher should:

The designated teacher should be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

The most effective designated teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This

involves, working with the Virtual School Heads (VSH) to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.

This means making sure that all staff:

- have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP 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, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and
- for previously looked-after children, 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.

Designated teachers are also likely to have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by:

- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that: they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage; there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care; there are effective procedures in place to

support a looked-after child's learning; particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve; transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion; thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment; when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and there are no barriers to looked-after children 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 looked-after children to attend meetings).

- Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning; are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;

* Are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.

- Being a source of advice for teachers about: differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked after children, 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.

- Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to: promote good home-school links; support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians; ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home; ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.

- Having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked after children’s PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary; and
- working closely with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.

When supporting previously looked-after children, designated teachers should be aware of the following: the VSH must provide information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of these children - this may be general information, including training opportunities, or information and advice on individual children at the request of their parents or designated teacher. The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child’s education, including any requests to the VSH for advice on meeting their individual needs.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

- ensure that any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the policy on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to Looked After child’s request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher’s requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no Looked After child is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- positively promote the self esteem of Looked After Children
- monitor the attendance and punctuality of Looked After Children

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mr K Arshad, Chair of the Governing Body

The governing body, head teacher and school leadership team will want to consider the following in supporting the designated teacher role:

- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and act as a champion for them?
- Does the designated teacher have training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including a good knowledge of SEN?
- How does the designated teacher role contribute to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve?
- What resource implications might there be in supporting the designated teacher to carry out their role? • What expertise can designated teachers call on within and outside the school such as SENCOs, health and mental health support?
- What monitoring arrangements might be appropriate to ensure that the role of the designated teacher is providing appropriate support for looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school roll?

The needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children may have implications for almost every school policy and consideration may want to be given to ensure that policies are effective in reflecting their needs. How schools monitor this is up to them, but some of the issues that may be considered are:

Most VSHs agree that, as a minimum, designated teachers should have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of looked-after children. As previously looked-after children face very similar challenges, it should be possible to include meeting the needs of these children as part of the same training.

- that there are no unintended barriers to the admission of looked-after and previously looked-after children either at normal transition or any other point of the school year;
- whether there are any issues arising as a result of the number of looked-after and previously looked-after children on roll at the school and the number of local authorities which are involved;
- whether looked-after and previously looked-after children have made the expected or better levels of progress over the past twelve months in line with their peers (i.e. educational, social and emotional progress);
- whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked-after and previously looked-after children is different to that of other children at the school;
- for looked-after children, 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 (PEPs);
- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met;
- whether any looked-after or previously looked-after children face additional safeguarding challenges of which the school's designated safeguarding lead should be aware;
- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level;
- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children's challenging behaviour in the most effective way for those children;
- how the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked after children are reflected in school policies, in particular in relation to interventions and resources;
- what the impact is of any of the school's policies, e.g. on charging for educational visits and extended school activities, on looked-after children; and

For the purpose of school admissions, a looked-after child is a child who is (a) in the care of an English local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by such a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). A previously looked-after child is a child adopted from the care of an English local authority under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 or who, immediately after being looked after by an English local authority, became the subject of a special guardianship or child arrangements order and are still subject to such orders.

What impact Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) has in supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Governing bodies should, through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the PP+ is used) and their level of progress. In some schools, designated teachers do this by providing the governing body with a regular report. The patchy nature in the numbers of looked-after and previously looked-after children in any one school means it would be best to have a flexible approach to providing such a report.

TRAINING

The Head teacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring that staff, where appropriate, are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

DATE October 2023

REVIEW DATE Autumn 2024