

Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School

**A Policy for Looked After Children
and previously Looked After Children**

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Reviewed and agreed by Governors - Autumn 2020
Next review date - Autumn 2023

Designated Teacher for Children Looked After: Shona Pitcher Deputy Head

Introduction

The Staff and Governors at Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School are committed to promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children. We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child. We understand that vulnerable students are best supported with high quality teaching and whole school awareness of trauma informed practice

Nationally, looked after children (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 these pupils to succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School has a Designated Teacher who is responsible for meeting the needs of this group of pupils. The post holder is a qualified teacher and is empowered to have whole school influence.

Definition of Looked After Children

The Children Act (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 'children looked after' (CLA) or children in care or 'looked after children' (LAC) 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 a year.

We recognises that looked after children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and may experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Procedures

We will ensure that:

- We have a designated member of staff who undertakes regular training.
- All members of staff develop their understanding of meeting the needs of looked after children and previously looked after children.
- All members of staff know how to respond to a pupil who makes a safeguarding disclosure.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to looked after children.
- Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and up-dated.
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection procedures as part of their induction into the school.
- All staff with looked after children or previously looked after children will have a copy of this policy.

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential. The Designated Teacher will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff are aware that they cannot make a promise to a child that they will keep a secret.

School staff will be sensitive to foster parents, parents or pupils wishes in sharing information about individual circumstances.

Responsibilities

The role of the designated teacher within the school

The designated teacher will have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked after children learn and achieve.

The designated teacher will:

- Act as an advocate for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After
- Champion an attachment aware school, promoting high quality, inclusive teaching.
- Ensure the school complies with the Admissions Code to ensure priority for CLA and previously CLA
- Ensure that the educational achievement of each looked after child is monitored, tracked, promoted and where relevant accelerated
- Ensure the school follows DfE Guidance on Exclusions for vulnerable children and understand the importance of school stability for this group.
- Has a good working knowledge of the SEND code of practice
- Tracks and monitors attendance of looked after children
- Ensures all staff are aware of the barriers for looked after children and understand the need for systems and strategies to support them e.g. pre and over learning, emotion coaching, safe place to be etc
- Liaise with other relevant professions in the network around the child. For example; social worker, foster carer, independent reviewing officer.
- Chair PEP meetings for all Looked After Children each term having gathered progress updates from across the staff.
- Advise on the most effective use of the Pupil Premium+ in liaison with relevant professionals in the PEP meeting e.g. reference to Education Endowment Foundation; Sutton Trust.
- Set learning based targets for pupils at PEP meetings and ensure these are implemented to a high standard and in time frame
- Ensure that they are aware of children who are previously looked after, including those who have a Special Guardianship Order, to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of previously looked-after children. This should include promoting good practice, identifying and meeting their needs, and guidance on effective use of the PPG.
- Report to the Governing body (annually) on the outcomes of Looked After Children.
- Attend Designated Teacher forum and training and disseminate this information to the wider school community and maintain a good knowledge of research recommendations for this group.

Responsibility of All Staff

- To ensure that looked after and previously looked after children are supported sensitively and confidentiality is maintained.
- To be familiar with this policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- To have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after and previously looked after children with an aim to close the attainment gap between this group and their peers
- To attend Designated Teacher whole school training and apply techniques to include looked after and previously looked after children within the lessons and school community.

Responsibility of the Head Teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of children looked after and adopted Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children Looked After to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

- To ensure the Governing Body has a named governor responsible for looked after children (**NAME**)
- To be aware of how many Looked After Children are on roll at our school
- To ensure that there is a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- To support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff to ensure the needs of this group are met and that the school is an Attachment Aware, inclusive learning environment.
- Attend relevant training
- To review the effective implementation of this policy (annually/ termly)

Support for children and families

To support looked after children and previously looked after children the school receives funding called Pupil Premium Grant. Pupil premium funding is not ring-fenced and schools can pool Pupil Premium money for numerous children to pay for collective support to gain maximum impact from the funding. The Pupil Premium is additional money for schools to improve the educational and personal outcomes of disadvantaged pupils including those who have been adopted from care. It is not intended that the additional funding should be used to back-fill the general school budget nor that the funding should be used to support other groups of pupils. Schools are inspected by Ofsted on their effective use of pupil premium funding. Please refer to the website for further details on how the school spends its pupil premium funding in the annual report.

Items previously/currently funded through PPG funding:

- Pastoral support/school counselor
- Attachment aware training for all staff
- Nurture groups/lunchtime support

- Funding for extra-curricular clubs/trips
- Intervention groups for learning or well-being.

Pupil Premium for Children Adopted from Care

From April 2014, schools in England can receive the Pupil Premium for children adopted from care, or who left care under a Special Guardianship Order on or after 30 December 2005. Schools can also claim the Pupil Premium for children who left care under a Residence Order on or after 14 October 1991. The Pupil Premium is to help schools raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap with their peers. It is paid to schools in respect of disadvantaged pupils in Reception to Year 11. The Government has extended the coverage of the Pupil Premium in recognition of the traumatic experiences many adopted children have endured in their early lives and a realisation that their needs do not change overnight.

To enable the school to claim the Pupil Premium, parents will need to inform the school about their child and provide supporting evidence, for example, show the school the original Adoption (Court) Order.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) and Pupil Premium for Children Looked After

All Children Looked After must have a PEP as part of their overall care plan. The PEP should be sent to the designated teacher when the child becomes looked after or joins the school. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, and will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require

The PEP is a shared document which includes the information that everyone needs to help their conversations, planning and the delivery of strategies required to make sure the child gets the support and provision needed to succeed. The designated teacher leads on how the PEP is used as a tool in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored. S/he makes sure that it is updated and available in time for the local authority review of the child's wider care plan.

The LAC pupil premium must be managed by the designated virtual school head (VSH) and used for the benefit of the child looked after's educational needs as described in their personal education plan (PEP). The VSH should ensure there are arrangements in place to discuss how the child will benefit from pupil premium funding with the designated teacher in the child's education setting.

In Kingston, PEPs are reviewed termly. For each statutory review of the care plan the PEP must include any new information about progress towards education targets since the last PEP review and information about what has not been taken forward. The designated teacher has a key role in helping looked after children make a smooth transition to their new school or college, including making sure there are effective arrangements in place for the speedy transfer of information.

Children Adopted from Care and previously looked after reviews

The Designated Teacher is available at parent consultations should parents wish to discuss any aspects of their child's need, alongside the class teacher. The designated teacher is available to meet with parents at other times via an appointment through the office.

At the end of the academic year, parents will be offered a transition meeting with the current class teacher and where possible the new class teacher to share information and discuss transition arrangements. In the case of LAC, this may form part of the PEP meeting.

Admission and Transition Arrangements

See Local Authority Admission guidelines on admission for LAC and pupils post adoption in community schools.

On entry to school, a discussion will take place with school staff and the person holding parental responsibility in regards to any arrangements that need to be put in place, such as:

- Any family/child history which may impact on the child whilst at school
- Arrangements for collection and who has contact with the child
- Any medical needs
- Permissions for use of photographs in and outside of school – this includes whether photographs can be included on displays, learning journals, whether children can be included in events where other parents may take photographs, websites.

This information will then be passed on to subsequent class teachers. It is important that any changes to circumstances are timely communicated by the care giver to school staff. For CLA these arrangements are discussed during the PEP meeting.

Key documents

Link to Grand Avenue primary School Policies – Child protection and Safeguarding
<http://www.grandavenue.kingston.sch.uk/policies/policydoc.php>

AfC Virtual School website

<https://www.afcvirtualschool.org.uk/>

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - summary

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused-summary>

Working Together to Safeguard Children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2#history>

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of LAC under section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

The Virtual School Head (VSH) for Children Looked After in Achieving for Children is Suzanne Parrott. Phone: 020 8831 6410

Contact form: <https://www.afcvirtualschool.org.uk/form/?pid=14&form=18>