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**LOOKED AFER CHILDREN**

**POLICY**

**This Policy was adopted by the Full Governing Body of**

**Littletown Primary Academy**

**On 16th March 2021**

**signed…………………………………………………..**

**(Chair of Governors)**

**Date Policy to be reviewed on:**

**March 2024**

**Littletown Primary Academy and Nursery**

**Looked After Children Policy**

**March 2021**

At Littletown Primary Academy we believe that all Looked After Children, and those previously in care, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve their full potential. As a school we aim to be champions for Looked After Children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development. To do this we commit to:

* ensuring improved educational life chances for Looked After Children
* supporting Looked After Children to raise their aspirations
* giving Looked After Children a sense of the control they have over their lives
* fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
* providing continuity and ‘normality’ for Looked After Children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

**Definition: Who are our Looked After Children?**

Most Looked After Children will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their parent(s), sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is in the Care of the Local Authority if he or she is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Authority. This includes the following:

(a) Children who are accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;

(b) Children who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order

(c) Children who are the subject of Emergency Orders for the protection of the child.

**Legal Framework**

1. Littletown Primary Academy and Nursery have a designated teacher for Looked After Children (Childrens and Young Persons Act of 2008).
2. All Local Authorities have a Virtual School Headteacher (The Families Act of 2014).
3. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) states all schools must have a Looked After Children policy.

**Littletown Primary Academy and Nursery:**

* Ensures all Looked after children have access to a balanced and broadly based education.
* Aims to continue to improve the academic achievement of Looked After Children;
* Prioritises a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all Looked After Children;
* Ensures there is a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of all Looked After Children who are on the school roll
* Develops effective systems of communications and protocols
* Promotes the attendance of Looked After Children.
* Nominates a named School Governor for Looked After Children

**Aim**

At Littletown Primary Academy and Nursery to ensure support for Looked After Children we will:

* Create a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their responsibility in supporting both the child and their carer.
* Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children
* Bring the educational attainments of our Looked After Children in line with those of their peers
* Make sure Looked After Children have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
* Ensure that all Looked After Children are treated inclusively
* Have high expectations of Looked After Children’s involvement in learning and educational progress and ensure that more able children are identified and appropriate provision is in place to enable them to reach or exceed their potential;
* Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families
* Be aware of the reasons which may affect the behaviour of a Looked After Child and understand that this is often a form of communication which may need a more personalised response or intervention;
* Understand how important it is to see Looked After Children as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
* Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a Child in Care’s status
* Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to provide additional, personalised support as identified in the Personal Education Plan;
* Closely monitor each child’s attendance and academic progress, working and sharing information in a timely manner with the Virtual School to help ensure each child achieves the best possible educational outcomes;
* Plan for future transitions effectively including planning for transport.
* Challenge negative stereotypes amongst students and staff;
* Closely monitor the social and personal progress of all Looked After Children;
* Ensure discretion when addressing a child’s Care status and the background and family history of children who are in Care, especially surrounding teaching and learning relating to the family;
* Ensure a clear protocol is followed in the sharing of information, both within school and with outside agencies. (inline with GDPR)

**Admissions and Transitions**

We will:

* Prioritise the admission of Looked After Children, and those who have been adopted who have a Special Guardianship Order,
* Ensure that all Looked After Children meet the Designated Teacher who will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral;
* Prepare appropriate inductions for all Looked After Children
* Meet with the Devon Area Learning Advocate to make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information records are obtained at the outset;
* Forward appropriate documents to any receiving school at the point of transition
* Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

**Attendance (in line with the Attendance policy)**

We will:

* Implement a first day of absence procedure for all Looked After Children whose attendance falls below 95%;
* Inform the Carer / Area Learning Advocate / Education Welfare service / Social Worker / Parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance;
* Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.

**Exclusion (in line with behaviour policy)**

We will:

* Actively follow the DCC Protocol for Reducing Exclusions of Children in Care.

**Multi-Agency Liaison**

* We will support the child to engage fully in planning and decision making;
* The Designated Teacher will liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the child’s Social Worker
* There will be a clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved;
* Our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child;
* Be aware of, and sensitive to, the appropriate role of the parents.
* Our Designated Teacher will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical or other information held by the school are completed and returned on time, to comply with statutory obligations;
* Encourage each of our Looked After Children to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self esteem and learning.

**Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

We will:

* Hold a PEP meeting in time for every Statutory Care Review that involves the Social Worker, PEP Coordinator, Foster Carers, child and parent (if appropriate).
* Have a high quality PEP for each child which includes appropriate targets and has been quality assured by the Virtual School;
* Contribute to the process whereby all Looked After Children have a high quality PEP in place within 20 days of starting at the school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child’s Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child;
* Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in the PEP will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Looked After Children have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set
* Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is carefully targeted to improve the educational outcomes of the Child in Care and used as identified in the Personal Education Plan
* Make or support applications for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) eg. those who are at risk of under-achieving academically or for extra-curricular activities through discussions at PEP meetings
* Seek to nominate our Looked After Children to DCC for the annual Looked After Children Celebration of Achievement Event.

**School Trips and Special Activities**

We aim to ensure that Looked After Children enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving places for them on trips or enrichment activities for which they are eligible. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the Social Worker, sometimes delegated to Foster Carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting.

**Complaints**

If a young person, parent/carer or Social Worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should, in the first instance, raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and Social Worker.

**Children with SEN**

Littletown Primary Academy will:

* Quickly identify any Special Educational Needs and ensure appropriate provision will be made
* Have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this;
* Ensure that if the child has a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly Care Planning Reviews; dates can be obtained from the Social Worker.

**Safeguarding**

Littletown Primary Academy and Nursery is committed to safeguarding all children. Staff and parents/carers are committed to working in partnership, alongside external agencies as required.

Date: 16th March 2021

Review date: March 2024

**Appendix 1**

**Covid 19**

* All Children in Care are encouraged to come to school during Lockdown/school closure under the remit 'vulnerable child.’
* All Children in Care will be added to the vulnerable children registers.
* If the foster families/social services agree to keep the child out of school the designated Child in Care lead will make weekly contact with the child.

**Appendix 2**

**Governor’s Responsibility**

The Designated Governor for Looked After Children will:

* Know the number of Looked After Children on the school roll
* Meet with the designated teacher
* Know Looked After Children have PEPs
* Have an overview of overall attainment and progress of Looked After Children in the school / performance compared to peers
* Know the number of Looked After Children with SEN and with an Education Health Care Plan (ECHP);
* Know the number of Looked After Children who have had a Fixed Period Exclusion in the previous 12 months
* Support the designated teacher to monitor effective and efficient use of the Pupil Premium for its Looked After Children
* Have an awareness of how the LA supports educational achievement of Looked After Children.

**Appendix 3**

**The role of the Designated Teacher is to:**

* Promote the educational achievement of every Child in Care on the school’s roll
* Monitor the attainment and progress of a child in care
* Ensure effective expenditure of the Pupil Premium Plus funding;
* Ensure the Voice of the Child is heard;
* Liaise with the Area Learning Advocate from the Virtual School
* Regularly report progress and attainment for every Child in Care to the Virtual School
* Facilitate the training of school staff in developing their understanding of the factors which can affect how Looked After Children learn and develop;
* Contribute to the development and review of whole school policy
* Promote a culture in which Looked After Children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
* Promote a culture in which Looked After Children are able to discuss their progress, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
* Ensure completion and return of the annual teacher Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for each Child in Care
* Maintain records regarding all Looked After Children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child;
* Establish a specific system for Looked After Children with regard to contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools
* Have an overview and coordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding Looked After Children;
* Maintain and respect confidentiality of all Looked After Children and ensure that information is shared on a strictly need to know basis;
* Play an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to statutory reviews of Looked After Children as required;
* Serve as a named contact for colleagues in the Virtual School and Social Care and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;
* Ensure data requested by the Virtual School for Looked After Children is returned
* Ensure that strategies are in place for effective transfers between schools where appropriate