Avishayes Primary School & Early Years Centre

Children Looked After

Responsibility:	**Governors**
Reviewed:	**January 2021**
Next review date:	**January 2022**
Key legislation:	**Equality Act 2010**
This policy should be read in conjunction with:	
Exclusion Policy **Anti-bullying Policy** **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** **Equal Opportunities Policy** **Attendance Policy** **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**	

Purpose

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After.

Rationale

Children Looked After – CLA – are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Children Looked After have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers, which can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Children Looked After progressing to Higher Education and following progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term **'in care'** refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are **'accommodated'** by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be **'Children Looked After' (**LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Introduction

Avishayes Primary School and Early Years Centre aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and Welfare of Children Looked After.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is the Headteacher, Clare Rinaldi and the Deputy designated teacher is the Assistant Headteacher, Karen Coulson.

The Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After is Alison Hawes.

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of Children Looked After.

The Children's Act places a duty to safeguard Children Looked After, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure they are able to 'achieve and reach their full potential.' The guidance recognises the collective responsibility of Local authority 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 – prioritise action
- Listening to children

As corporate parents Avishayes School believes in the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education
- Listening to children's views and opinions
- Providing stability and continuity – good transition between phases
- Taking corporate responsibility
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising standards
- Intervening early
- Promoting early years experiences
- Celebrating success and achievements

Aims

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for Children Looked After as for all children
- Ensure that all Children Looked After have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- Ensure that Looked After pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- Ensure that carers and social workers of Looked After pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment

- Ensure that Looked After pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Admissions

The Governing Body endorses the Somerset County Council Policy for the admission of Children Looked After.

Due to care placement changes, Children Looked After may enter school at any point in a term. Avishayes School believes that it is vital that we give each Looked After Child a positive welcome and full support for their induction and to help them settle and be part of our learning community.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our Children Looked After Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Looked After pupils.

Allocation of Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

We will work in partnership with Somerset Virtual School for Children Looked After and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that Children Looked After receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Monitoring the progress of Children Looked After

The social worker for the Children Looked After initiates a Personal Education Plan – PEP – within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the child or young person is actively involved.
This school assesses each Looked After pupil's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP Review meetings and to provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, specialist teacher from Somerset Virtual School, or other Virtual School where the child is from another Local Authority, and other agencies.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher knows all the Children Looked After in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Somerset Virtual School specialist staff, or other Virtual School specialists for those looked after students who are from other Local Authorities, teacher/support worker and social worker.

The status of Children Looked After is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with LAC within the school and disseminate information.

Partnership with Parents/Carers and Care Workers

We believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

Links with External Agencies/Organisations

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Somerset Virtual School for Children Looked After
- Other Virtual Schools for Children Looked After from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services

- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- School age parents' officer
- External Learning Providers

LAC Policy Review and Evaluation

We undertake a thorough review of both the Children Looked After Policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Development Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for Children Looked After within school
- Be proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise attainment of Children Looked After
- Work in partnership with Somerset Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those pupils who are from other Local Authorities, providing termly progress data on the progress of Children Looked After
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Children Looked After on both the Children Looked After and the rest of the school community
- Know all the Children Looked After in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about Children Looked After and disseminate information and good practice to other staff
- Influence school policy and practice for Children Looked After
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Children Looked After, seeking advice from Somerset Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those pupils from other Local Authorities, when appropriate.

- Ensure that Children Looked After receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Arrange and contribute to PEP Review meetings
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Monitor the targets set out in the PEP
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Children Looked After is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Children Looked After
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra- curricular activities for Children Looked After
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement
- Report to the Governing body on Children Looked After in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events
- Prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
    - The number of Children Looked After on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
    - Their attendance compared to other pupils.
    - Their attainment (GLD, Phonics screening,SATs etc) compared to other pupils.
    - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
    - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.

- Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Children Looked After.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENDCo and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.

All school staff will:

- Positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self-esteem.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Children Looked After.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress.
- Ensure any Children Looked After are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Follow school procedures.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Children Looked After and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a Children Looked After is experiencing difficulties
- Work in partnership with Somerset Virtual School, and/or Virtual Schools from other Local Authorities, and other agencies to prevent a Looked After Child's behaviour leading to an official exclusion and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement.
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher, Somerset Virtual School for Children Looked After, and other Virtual Schools for those students who are from other Local Authorities, and professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports available when required.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Children Looked After according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Children Looked After

- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After
- Liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Children Looked After are met
- Identify a governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for Children Looked After who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Children Looked After equal access in respect of:
  - Admission to school
  - National Curriculum and examinations
  - Out of school learning and extra - curricular activities
  - Additional educational support
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Children Looked After.

Somerset Local Authority will:

- Provide a Virtual Headteacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Children Looked After
- Provide a specialist team to provide a wrap-around service for Children Looked After as part of Somerset's Virtual School
- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Children Looked After
- Ensure that the education for this group of pupils is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- Ensure that Children Looked After receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every Children Looked After has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Somerset from another authority
- Make sure that each Children Looked After has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate

- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1 and 2 and at any mid-phase transfer including options advice and guidance for Key Stage 2-3 transition.
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special educational needs of Children Looked After and work collaboratively with schools, other services and agencies to meet those needs.

Local Authority contact details for the Education of Children Looked After are:

Somerset Virtual School for Children Looked After
To contact Somerset's Virtual School Head, Emily Walters, please email ewalters@somerset.gov.uk
To contact the Virtual School email thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Every LAC needs a PEP which ensures access to services and support, contributes to stability, minimises disruption and broken schooling, signals particular and special needs, establishes clear goals and acts as record of progress and achievement.

The PEP should be an integral part of the LAC's Care Plan, which is drawn up by Social Services, in close collaboration with the child, his or her family, the social worker and teacher and primary carers. It should be agreed as soon as possible and at least within 20 school days of entering care or of joining a new school. The PEP will normally be reviewed concurrently with the Care Plan, i.e. within 28 days, 3months, 6 months etc.

The LAC and SEN

- The needs of the LAC should be known to the SENCo, the designated teacher, their carer and their social worker.
- The PEP should detail their needs and the support already provided.
- It is important to ensure that any special educational needs are identified and assessd.
- We must not assume that all LAC have special educational needs