Aylesford School

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Character Education Trust

Aylesford School

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Ratified/Reviewed by…	Date	Date to be reviewed
LGB	December 25	December 26

Equality Statement

Aylesford School strongly promotes equality of opportunity under all circumstances and in all contexts. We actively seek to ensure that all members of our community and all visitors to the school are treated equally. This includes actively ensuring that discrimination or inequality of any kind does not occur on the basis of the following:

- Race
- Nationality
- Gender (including transgender/gender questioning)
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Age
- Mental health
- Marital status

Discrimination and inequality can be experienced in the following ways, not exclusively:

- Inappropriate or offensive language/terminology
- Cultural misrepresentation
- Violence/physical harm
- Bullying
- Online abuse
- Disadvantage in all aspects of progress, care and opportunity

When inequality or discrimination is seen or reported, the school will strongly challenge and work to resolve the issue. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated fully and without prejudice.

This policy is updated annually by the Designated Teacher and reviewed by the Governing Body for approval.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy a child 'looked after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

A child is in 'state care' outside of England and Wales if s/he is in care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.
Aylesford School recognises that 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children' may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Legal Framework

The policy is informed by the following Department for Education (DfE) document: *The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children. Statutory Guidance on their Roles and Responsibilities.*
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

School Commitment

Nationally, 'Looked After Children' (LAC) and 'Previously Looked After Children' (PLAC) 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. 75% of LAC and PLAC leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping LAC and PLAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.
Aylesford School recognises that LAC and PLAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC and PLAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities,

obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances.

Aylesford School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of LAC and PLAC in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.

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- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.
- All LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

Admissions and Transitions

We will:

- Prioritise the admission of LAC, and those who have been adopted who have a Special Guardianship Order, within our own Admissions procedures in order to admit students without delay, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care;
- Ensure that all LAC meet the Designated Teacher who will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral;
- Ensure a warm welcome to our school by providing appropriate induction for all LAC/PLAC so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate;
- Make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information records are obtained at the outset;
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition (where the receiving school is made known);
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

Attendance (also see our Attendance Policy)

We will:

- Implement a first day of absence procedure for all LAC;
- Inform the Carer / Virtual School* / Education, Performance and Inclusion Team / 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.

Suspension

We will actively follow KCC Protocol for Reducing Suspensions of LAC

Multi Agency Working

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 on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared;
- 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 LAC 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, Foster Carers, child and parent (if appropriate). Additional attendees may include; Educational Psychologist/Advisory Teachers, Therapists, Health, Virtual School etc. We will seek the views of the child as to appropriate attendees in line with the statutory guidance;
- 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 LAC 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 LAC 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 LAC and used as identified in the Personal Education Plan

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that LAC enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as allocating a proportion of PP+ funding to cover some of the costs for trips and activities. 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

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints at Aylesford School are used for complaints about provision made for LAC and PLAC. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the Designated Teacher in the first instance to resolve the issue before making the complaint formally via our complaints process.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC and PLAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC and PLAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used to good effect, for the benefit of all disadvantaged students and for the whole student body. This funding should not be assigned to individual students, but a cumulative amount to improve learning experiences and progress

Governing Body

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC and PLAC are recognised and met.

- Receive an information report once a year setting out:
    - The number of LAC and PLAC students on the school's roll (if any).
    - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
    - Their progress/attainment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
    - The number of suspensions and permanent exclusions (if any).
    - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.

This report should be provided in a way that preserves the anonymity and confidentiality of the pupils involved.

Designated Teacher(s)

Years 7-9: Mrs S. Hann: Assistant Headteacher, SENCO, Qualified Teacher
Years 10-13: Miss K. Allen: Assistant Headteacher, SENCO, Qualifies Teacher

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "*someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for LAC and PLAC assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school*
Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy *shares and supports high expectations for them*." It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC and PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school/onward setting.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that LAC and PLAC are potentially at a higher risk of being bullied by other students, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored in line with the attendance policy.

Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all students.
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.
- Be aware that LAC and PLAC are potentially at a higher risk of being bullied by other students so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.