



# **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

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## **GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT**

At Fairfield we strive to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where everyone is valued and respected equally. We aim to provide an inclusive education where children develop independent learning skills and are taught according to need whatever their age, gender, background, beliefs or abilities.

National legislation regarding disabilities, special education needs, equality, race relations and related aspects underpin this policy which also reflects other national, local and in-house policies and guidance.

## **THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA)**

Fairfield aims to maximise opportunity for every pupil to succeed. Children and young people who are looked after by local authorities are one of the groups most likely to underachieve nationally. The organisation is committed to supporting looked after pupils to achieve their full potential alongside other pupils, to enjoy their learning and to experience success in school.

### **AIMS:**

#### **The school aims to ensure that:**

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for
- To work together with the Local Authority, Children with A Disability Team, Foster Carers, Medical and Nursing Services, Therapy Services and all other stakeholders in an effective partnership to ensure that the children's needs are met
- To contribute to the provision of a successful and integrated service for children who are looked after by the LA
- To ensure that children who are looked after have equality of opportunity in school, enabling them to access, experience and benefit from education alongside peers and respecting their right to anonymity if this is their wish
- To comply with the LA guidelines on the education and care of looked after children and young people

#### **To ensure these aims are achieved Fairfield will:**

- Identify a designated teacher to co-ordinate the education of looked after children, to ensure that staff in the school are aware of any looked after children, know each carer and understand individual circumstances including parental rights and access
- Liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings
- Work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after children receive their full entitlements including provision and access to school news and information
- Ensure that all records are kept and maintained appropriately
- Provide information to the Governing Body and LA about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils on the school roll

- Secure training for the designated teacher or others appropriate to ensure that the school can meet the needs of looked after children

#### **LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE:**

This policy is based on the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance For The Designated Teacher For Looked After And Previously Looked After Children

It also takes into account Section 20 and Section 20A of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

##### **Looked after children are registered pupils that are:**

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its Social Services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

##### **Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:**

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:
  - A Child Arrangements Order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
  - A Special Guardianship Order
  - An Adoption Order

##### **They appear to the Governing Board to have:**

- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

**Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is part of a looked after child's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

**Virtual School Head (VSH)** is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked after children.

#### **OUR DESIGNATED TEACHER:**

- Our Designated Teacher is Hazel Ettienne
- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Tanzila Ilyas
- Our Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children at our school.
- Our safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for Safeguarding, Attendance and Welfare. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

#### **THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT):**

The DT will fulfil their responsibility to the looked after child through:

- Working with VSHs
- Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised

- Liaising with the HT/DSL, foster carers and other agency workers as requested to ensure a coherent approach across services
- Being aware of the Care Plan for each child
- Contributing to the development and maintenance of a Personal Education Plan in partnership with other relevant professionals
- Knowing who has parental responsibility for the child
- Knowing who are the primary carers
- Ensuring that information is provided for those who are entitled to receive it
- Working sensitively with information to ensure that looked after children are not exposed to inappropriate or intrusive attention from staff or pupils
- Establishing good relationships and lines of communication with key workers and foster carers
- Contributing to or attending meetings as requested
- Maintaining an overview of the experiences and education of the child
- Participating in appropriate training to develop the skills and knowledge needed to support the looked after child
- Ensure that the looked after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their Care Plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered

### **SUPPORTING BOTH LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked after and previously looked after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses Pupil Premium funding
- Work with VSH's to agree how Pupil Premium funding for looked after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked after children about Pupil Premium funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how Pupil Premium funding is used to support previously looked after children
- Encourage the involvement of parents and guardians in deciding how Pupil Premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked after and previously looked after children in areas like attendance and behaviour
- Be aware of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) of looked after and previously looked after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the SEND Code of Practice, as it relates to looked after children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans that a looked after child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked after and previously looked after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked after and previously looked after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked after children

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SCHOOL:**

### **The Governing Body (GB) will:**

Fulfil their responsibilities to looked after children through:

- Ensuring that this policy is implemented
- Nominating a governor to maintain interest in the well-being of looked after children
- Ensuring that the GB takes up suitable training opportunities
- Monitoring appropriate training for school staff

### **The Headteacher (HT) will:**

- Have day to day responsibility for the management and organisation of the school and is the first point of contact for any matters relating to the pupils
- Fulfil responsibility to looked after children through:
  - Ensuring that this policy is approved by the GB and that it is reviewed on a regular basis
  - Ensuring that any practical guidelines needed to ensure the well-being of any particular child are identified
  - Nominating a teacher to take pastoral responsibility and ensure the well-being and education of looked after children
  - Monitoring and informing of the legal position with regard to parental access and provision of school's reports
  - Promoting the role of key workers and carers
  - Ensuring sensitivity relating to the child's past experiences
  - Managing any other relevant information

### **The Headteacher** should report periodically to the Governing Body on:

- The admission of any looked after children
- Progress and achievement of looked after children
- Significant issues, events or incidents involving looked after children
- The level of attendance in relation to school averages

### **The Headteacher** should ensure:

- Appropriate training opportunities are taken up and promote and maintain good working relationships with key personnel from other agencies

## **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES:**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- SEN
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs