Halfway Nursery Infant School

Looked After Children Policy

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Signed (Headteacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Minute Number	

HALFWAY NURSERY INFANT SCHOOL

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) POLICY

LAC Designated Teacher: Mrs Jo Lomas
Senior Designated Staff: Mrs Jo Lomas (SENCO) & Miss Rebecaa Hughes (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)
Governors with responsibility for LAC: Mrs Catherine Hutton

Introduction

The governing body of Halfway Nursery Infant School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children"(2010) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 . Children who are "looked after" may be "Accommodated ", "In Care" or "remanded/ detained" as follows.

Accommodated (Section 20)
This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

In Care.
A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

Remanded/detained
A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:-

- an emergency protection order
- removed by police using their powers of protection
- remanded by a court following criminal charges
- a court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

Looked After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:-

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others.
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of their education and future life-chances.
The governing body of Halfway Nursery Infant School, is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- a Designated Teacher For Looked After Children
- personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children.
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

The Designated Teacher should:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan(PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, which should take place within 20 days, and then reviewed at 3 months, 6 months and then every 6 months thereafter (and at other times where deemed necessary);
- monitor and track progress of Looked after Children in school and intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child in public care(if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed –as requested by the LA.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

The staff of the school will:

- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, asappropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- positively promote the self esteem of Looked After Children.
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ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing body of this school will:

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;

- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body. (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons)
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

Admission Arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.
The school recognises that looked after children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Looked after Children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE and Local Authority Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked after Children (England) Regulations 2006)

Support and Resources

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, pupil premium funding etc, to support appropriate provision for Looked after Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.
A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly. Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.
It is vital that the Looked After Child is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Exclusions

Halfway Nursery Infant School recognises that Looked after Children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.
The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

Staff Development and Training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked after Children. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked after Children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.
Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Looked after Children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

Home-School Liaison

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their potential. Consultation evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Links with Other Agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child including Social Care teams; Community Educational Psychologist; Health services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body	Designated Teacher	Whole School Staff
❑ Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice ❑ Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC ❑ Ensure there is a designated teacher for LAC ❑ Liaise with the headteacher, designated teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met ❑ Nominate *a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the designated teacher* ❑ Receive regular reports from the designated teacher which should include o the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan o their attendance, compared to other pupils o their attainment compared to other pupils o the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) o the destinations of pupils who leave the school ❑ Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of o Admission to school o National Curriculum and examinations both academic and vocational o Out of school learning and extra curricular activities o Work experience and careers guidance ❑ Annually, review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC	❑ Be an advocate for LAC ❑ Attend relevant training for LAC ❑ Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and individuals in relation to LAC seeking advice from Sheffield LA when appropriate. ❑ Ensure that all LAC receive a positive reintegration on entering the school ❑ Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate Personal Education Plan and that it is completed within 14 days of joining the school or of entering care ❑ Keep Personal Education Plans and other records up to date and reviewed appropriately ❑ Convene an urgent multi professional meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or at risk of exclusion. ❑ Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential/personal information on a need to know basis. ❑ Act as the key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC. ❑ 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 LAC ❑ Ensure speedy transfer of information when a LAC transfers into another educational placement. ❑ Contribute information to LAC reviews when required. ❑ Provide regular reports to the Governing Body regarding LAC in the school and relevant policy and practice development.	❑ Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC ❑ Positively promote the raising of a LACs self esteem ❑ Ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained ❑ Be familiar with the Guidance on Children Looked after and respond appropriately to requests for information to support Personal Education Plans, and review meetings ❑ Respond positively to the request to be a LACs named person ❑ Liaise with the designated teachers where a LAC is experiencing difficulties ❑ Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions as a last resort, in line with Sheffield's exclusion advice ❑ Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals ❑ Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals as appropriate.