

Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery



LAC Policy

January 2023

Useful contacts

Head Teacher and DSL	Mrs C Parker – 0161 303 9411
Safeguarding Team	Ms W McCoy and Mrs N Butler – 0161 303 9411
Designated Teacher for Looked after Children	Mrs C Parker – 0161 303 9411
Chair of Governors	Mr J Moon c/o of Broadbent Fold
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection	Mr J Moon
Local Authority Designated officer	Tania Brown Tel 0161 342 4398
Email	tania.brown@tameside.gov.uk
Tameside Children's Hub Hours	– Monday to Wednesday 8.30am to 5pm, Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday 8.30am to 4pm Tel 0161 342 4101 Out of hours Tel 0161 342 2222

In-line with the Equalities Act (2010) we aim to ensure that any child, irrespective of protected characteristics (age, gender including intersex and transgender, ethnicity or sexuality including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transvestite) is treated fairly and with respect. The law states that the public sector equality duty includes a general duty to, "Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not."

At times it may be appropriate not to follow this policy in its entirety, in order to cater for the needs of an individual child.

Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery believes that in partnership with TMBC and the Virtual School we have a duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children. (Appendix 1)

Legal Duty:

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2021) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and child referral units in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

OVERVIEW:

Looked after children (LAC) are those children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This may be with parental agreement, or it may be where a court makes a care order. The child could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with

other family members or with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

Previously LAC (PLAC) children are children who are no longer looked after by a Local Authority in England as they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

This school recognises that LAC children have very specific needs which arise from their situation and they frequently suffer from distress and uncertainty. We aim to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety and individual care and attention for all our children.

OBJECTIVES:

- To ensure that LAC children thrive and reach their potential in all areas of their education, social, personal, emotional and physical development.
- Plan support for LAC realistically, and using the school's resources efficiently, in order to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Pastoral care and support is in place and effective to meet the particular needs of LAC.
- Ensure teachers and staff understand and take account of the evidence that LAC are more likely than others to underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers.
- Teachers and staff are aware of, and take into account, the evidence that a LAC child's academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances.
- All staff in this school are committed to helping LAC succeed by working with other relevant agencies in providing a better future for them. This is a key priority for all in our school.
- Training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC and PLAC safe.

KEY STRATEGIES:

The school will provide an appropriately trained senior member of staff, as a Designated Teacher, who will be responsible for all Looked After children (Mrs Parker).

This designated teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed in consultation with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Use the PEP to plan for any transition.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.
- Ensure that LAC children are not subjected to any possible bullying or unacceptable treatment because of their circumstances.

- Build relationships with health, education and social care partners so that they and the Virtual School Head (VSH) understand the support available to LAC children and previously-LAC children.
- Work with the VSH to support children in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- Promote the educational achievement of LAC and previously-LAC children at the school.
- Ensure that all copies of relevant records are forwarded to the LAC child's social workers and carers.
- Communicate with the Virtual School Head (VSH) and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- Communication with VSH and agree on how Child Premium Plus (PP+) can be used effectively to support the child's educational attainment and progress.
- The school will work with VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC or previously-LAC children and according to their individual needs. If necessary, school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

All LAC children must have a care plan; PEPS (Personal Education Plan) are an integral part of this care plan. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a child to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The school will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages. The PEP will address the child's full range of education and development needs, including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes: Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications. Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

All staff in school will ensure that high expectations are set for each LAC and have equal access to the same rich, balanced and broadly based education that every child in this school receives.

Support for any LAC with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

Any specific difficulties in transport and attendance, completing homework, obtaining parental consent for activities, funding for extra activities, correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances will be recognised early and dealt with sensitively, discreetly, efficiently and effectively.

Monitoring the attendance of LAC children will be a priority and swift, appropriate action will be taken where there are concerns.

The school will establish good communication between all those involved in the child's life.

The school will maintain and respect the child's confidentiality wherever possible by ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the circumstances of each child.

Each year the governing body will be given a report setting out: the number of looked-after children on the school's roll (if any); their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other children; their progress and achievement, as a discreet group, compared to other children; the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any); the destinations of children who leave the school. This will be done in a manner which preserves the anonymity and respect the confidentiality individual children.

SAFEGUARDING:

The school recognises that many LAC and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave children vulnerable to further harm or exploitation. All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.

Where a LAC or PLAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks. The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability. Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a LAC or PLAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on children who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

OUTCOMES:

The provision we make will ensure that each LAC will thrive in this school. The guidance and regulations for the care and education of looked after children will be met in full.

We will take particular account of all statutory guidance from DfE (The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children), The Education (Admission of Looked

After Children) (England) Regulations 2006 and the most recent relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors) when amending our policies or practice.

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not require an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews. The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the Virtual Head will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC. The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that LAC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting children with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Virtual School for Looked-After Children and Young People

Promoting The Achievement of Children and Young People in Care. Local Authorities (LAs) have the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of every looked-after child (LAC). This involves ensuring a wide range of adults work together in order to ensure:

- The child's learning needs (including their emotional and social development) are recognised, understood and met
- Expectations of the child's attainment are high
- The child's progress is regularly monitored and targets are set that enhance future learning and attainment
- The child's learning experience is consistent, with planned transitions
- The child develops high aspirations for their future learning.

In order for this to happen, the following key adults all have an important role:

- The Designated Teacher (DT) for LAC in the child's school
- All other school-based adults working with the child in school
- The Headteacher of Virtual School (HVS) and other Virtual School staff
- The child's social worker
- The child's carer

For some children, staff from specialised support services may also be needed to help the child achieve.

There are also implications for the work of other professionals e.g. in relation to the Local Authority,

School Admissions, Education Welfare etc., in ensuring the needs of all looked-after children are met.

This handbook is designed to ensure that each of the key adults is clear about their responsibilities in meeting the needs of looked-after children from Tameside.

NB The information here is not exhaustive and all professionals should be aware of their responsibilities under any relevant legislation.

The school is responsible for ensuring:

- The attainment and progress gap between looked-after children (LAC) and other children is closed
- A culture is developed of high aspirations amongst LAC
- LAC have access to high quality education
- Effective policies are in place to support the education and success of LAC

- A Designated Teacher (DT) is appointed to champion the attainment of LAC and act as a source of advice and information on their needs¹
- The Governing Body understands the importance of specific professional development for, as a minimum, the senior leadership team and DTs in supporting the achievement of LAC
- Relevant staff understand how admission arrangements, the avoidance of exclusions, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support, curriculum planning, multi-agency work and the management of challenging behaviour can be best addressed to meet the educational needs of LAC
- The Headteacher of Virtual School (HVS) and social worker are involved in all decisions about any change in school placement²
- The school actively supports any change in placement through effective integration plans
- Additional needs are assessed and additional support is provided to meet identified needs; acting on the advice of other agencies and giving time to implement and monitor strategies to support the child³
- As far as possible, the exclusion of any looked-after child is avoided⁴
- The HVS is informed about any concerns relating to the behaviour of a LAC
- An emergency Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting is arranged, inviting the HVS, social worker and any other relevant professional in the event of there being serious concerns about a LAC's education.

Whilst the Designated Teacher will be instrumental in leading or contributing to many of the points above, they will also have specific responsibilities as outlined overleaf.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring:

- They know the LAC on their roll well, understanding their needs and views
- A termly PEP⁵ meeting is held for every looked-after child on their school roll. (Whilst the social worker will call the first PEP meeting after a child is taken into care or starts a new school, the DT will call subsequent meetings. *This will avoid delay when there are changes in social worker, enable meetings to be at times appropriate to school progress tracking points and allow better co-ordination with SEND reviews.*)
- They lead on the development of the PEP and its use in school
- School staff implement any actions identified in the PEP effectively and without delay
- The PEP is fully completed and returned to the PEP-coordinator at the LA, with copies sent to the carer

Contact TMBC – Virtual School for Looked After Children and Young People for:-

¹ See Appendix A – An introduction to LAC

² See Appendix B – LAC and moving schools

³ See Appendix C – Addressing the SEN of LAC

⁴ See Appendix D – School exclusions and LAC

Contact TMBC Virtual School for Children and Young People for:-

⁵ See Appendix E – Guidance on Personal Education Plans

- That information in the PEP and any Individual Education Plan (IEP) / Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) – previously a Statement of Special Educational Need - is coordinated so that children are not confused and targets are consistent.
- The PEP addresses any need for catch-up support and other effective intervention to raise attainment and accelerate progress.

The Headteacher of Virtual School is responsible for ensuring:

- An up-to-date roll is kept of looked-after children in schools and colleges
- An up-to-date record is kept of Designated Teachers in schools and colleges in the LA
- The attendance and progress of looked-after children are monitored and evaluated effectively
- Headteachers and DTs know when a LAC is on their roll
- Schools and DTs understand their roles in relation to LAC
- All relevant adults understand their roles in relation to PEPs
- They are aware of the policies schools have in place to support LAC
- PEPs are high-quality and up-to-date for all LAC
- Any actions required of them that are identified in the PEP are implemented effectively and without delay
- They report regularly on the attainment of LAC to the Corporate Parenting Group
- A culture is promoted that takes into account children's views about their education
- Other professionals understand the importance of education for LAC
- There is an informed discussion about any changes in school placement
- They take primary responsibility for suitable education being provided for all LAC
- They work effectively with HVSs from other LAs to best meet the needs of LAC
- Arrangements are in place to support looked-after children who are in custody
- Training and advice is provided for schools, social workers, carers and LA staff
- Arrangements are in place for the allocation of Child Premium Plus⁶ payments for LAC.

The Social Worker is responsible for ensuring:

- They inform the child's school immediately after s/he becomes a LAC
- They coordinate an initial PEP meeting to be held within 10 school days of a child becoming looked-after
- They call a PEP meeting for any child without a school place, involving the HVS and carer (and LA SEN staff when appropriate) to consider appropriate education placements / providers
- In the case of an emergency placement suitable full time educational provision is secured within 20 school days
- The child's school is informed promptly of any significant event that might impact on the child's learning and behaviour in school (they may contact the school or request the carer to do this)

Contact TMBC Virtual School for Children and Young People for:-

⁶ See Appendix F – Pupil Premium Plus funding

- They attend any PEP meeting called by the DT, whenever practical, and always read completed PEPs
- The child's educational needs identified in the PEP are met as part of their care planning
- Care planning minimises any disruption to education and particularly between ages 14-18
- They have a good understanding of nationally expected attainment and progress in schools and the specific issues relating to LAC and educational barriers⁷
- PEPs are high-quality and up-to-date for all LAC on their caseload
- Any actions required of them that are identified in the PEP are implemented effectively and without delay
- They act on changes required to meet the LAC's educational needs, as identified by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- They continue to work with the school between statutory reviews of Care Plans to ensure up-to-date information is considered at reviews chaired by the IRO
- The HVS and IRO is involved in any decision about change in school placement
- They understand the rights and needs of LAC in relation to school admissions, SEND, attendance, exclusions and exam options
- They alert the IRO promptly about any significant changes or concerns relating to a LAC's educational provision or progress

The Carer (including Care Home Staff) is responsible for ensuring:

- They have a good understanding of nationally expected attainment and progress in schools and the specific issues relating to LAC and educational barriers
- They demonstrate the prioritisation of the educational achievement of children in their care
- They promote positive educational and recreational activities
- They support children in being aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- The HVS and social worker are involved in any decisions about change in school placement.

The Local Authority is responsible for ensuring:

- The attainment and progress gap is closed between looked-after children and other children
- A culture of high aspirations is created amongst looked-after children
- Looked-after children have access to high quality education
- LAC are exempted from Fair Access Protocols (understanding they are 'excepted children' in relation to infant class size and delay in accessing education is not tolerated, using powers of direction when required)
- The Children in Care Council (CiCC) regularly addresses educational issues and responds effectively

- The IRO raises any concerns about a LAC's education or PEP with the social worker and HVS.

For all professionals, it is essential to have due regard for requirements relating to safe-guarding, equality, confidentiality and data protection.