



MARSH HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

POLICY 2024 - 2026

Last reviewed on: March 2022
Approved by Head Teacher and Chair of Governors
FGB 8th May 2024

Legal Framework

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 (2023) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- [Updated] DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children 2023'

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

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Home-school arrangements
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Nationally, 'Looked After Children' (LAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We believe that our school has a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are exceptionally well prepared for the next steps in their lives. We aim to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful, enthusiastic learners and responsible individuals by providing a positive, safe and stimulating environment where all are included and achievements are celebrated.

Marsh Hill Primary School believes that in partnership with outside agencies as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC) are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents or respite care.

Previously - Looked After Children (PLAC) are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

LAC reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However, Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for LAC until they are 16 years old.

Our Aims

To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

To support our looked after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school activities.

To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children.

To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.

To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

Our school's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising aspiration
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and well-being
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

IN PURSUIT OF THIS POLICY, WE WILL

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Looked After Children.
- Work closely with the Virtual School and Social Care in the best interests of LAC and in completion of the Personal Education Plan (PEP).

The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children

Our designated teacher for looked after children is: Mr. Moheen

The role became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Persons' Act 2008 (the 2008 Act). The Designated Teacher must be a qualified teacher or a member of staff. Ideally, s/he should be a senior member of staff who has enough status and experience to advise and provide training to school staff on issues relating to LAC. They need to be able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning of these children.

DT Responsibilities:

- Knowing who all the LAC are in school and ensuring that availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- Attending relevant training about LAC and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how LAC should learn.
- Helping school staff understand the issues that affect the learning of LAC such as adaptive teaching strategies appropriate for individual children.
- Making sure that LAC are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Removing the barriers to learning for LAC.
- Ensuring any LAC new to the school are welcomed positively and assessed when they start at the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching.
- Developing personalised learning packages for LAC in conjunction with the relevant teaching staff.
- Ensuring that the LAC in their school have a voice in setting learning targets for themselves.
- Championing for LAC.
- Leading on developing and implementing the PEP within the school. The social worker is responsible for initiating the PEP process completing the relevant pages of the ePEP form.
- Monitoring the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved.
- Ensuring the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred without delay.
- Liaising with the Virtual School in all aspects of the LAC progress and support.
- Communicate with the Virtual School to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of LAC.
- Manage PP+ for Previously Looked After Children to support educational attainment and personal development.
- Convening urgent multi-agency meetings if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Arranging for a mentor or key worker to whom the young person can talk to. Arranging for the LAC to be supported by their peers.
- Producing at least one annual report to the governing body which should include: current progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented and whether the actions put in place are effective in addressing the learning needs of LAC, how the DT works in partnership with the LA, training undertaken for carrying out the role effectively. The report must not mention the children's names for confidentiality reasons.
- Promoting good home-school links and the importance of education as a way of improving life chances for LAC.
- Ensuring that, where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the Virtual School is informed at the earliest opportunity and additional support is provided to prevent exclusion, which would only be used as absolute last resort.
- Considering the needs of LAC and PLAC when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.

The role and responsibility of the Governing Board

- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- Ensure that the DT is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- In partnership with the headteacher, ensure that, through their training and development, the DT has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand the respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of LAC.
- Governing bodies and the SLT should make sure that the DT role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting LAC to achieve.
- The governing body, in partnership with the head teacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the DT.

This policy links with a number of other school policies/procedures and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them:

- Admissions policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Home school agreement
- Equality policy
- Positive behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy
- SEND policy

The school will champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and promote their well-being, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

This policy will be reviewed by the Designated LAC Teacher Bi-Annually.