



# Braunstone Community Primary School

## Policy for the Education of Looked After Children (LAC)

2022-2024

### AIM

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers. This policy sets out our commitment to ensure that Looked After Children, through their education, enjoy and achieve, are healthy, stay safe, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

Braunstone Community Primary School believes that in partnership with Leicester City Council (Virtual School) as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

### POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, individuals and organisations, providing and supporting the education of our Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

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 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; and
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the 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.

### 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 education and future life-chances. The 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.

## **Mental Health**

- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.
- Designated teachers are not expected to be mental health experts; however, they have an important role in ensuring they and other school staff can identify signs of potential issues and understand where the school can draw on specialist services, such as CAMHS and educational psychologists.
- Social, emotional and mental health is one of the four broad areas of children's SEN identified in Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 – 25 years (see Paragraph 5.32)

Designated teachers support staff to develop the skills to:

- identify signs of potential mental health issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable
- understand the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on looked-after and previously looked-after children and their ability to engage in learning. It is also important that the designated teacher and other school staff are aware that these issues will continue to affect previously looked-after children, and that the school will need to continue to respond appropriately to their needs.
- It is important to have a means of regularly measuring the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by looked-after and previously looked-after children. Currently, this is often done through the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Designated Teacher

Our school has a nominated member of the senior leadership team as the designated teacher. The designated teacher at Braunstone Community Primary is Miss Louise Harman. The designated teacher will act as their advocate and co-ordinate the support for them as per "The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children- Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities" DfE February 2018.

The designated teacher will:

- Know all the Looked After Children (LAC) in school and those who have been previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and who may therefore still need support
- Make sure that the young person's voice is heard and responded to
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for the achievement of Looked After Children
- Have sufficient up to date knowledge and training about the education, care and health (physical and psychological) needs of the Looked After Children.
- Respond proactively, support and challenge staff and seek support and advice from professionals if they reach the limits of their professional knowledge
- Ensure each LAC has an up to date, complete and high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) every term
- Ensure appropriate interventions and assessments are carried out so barriers to learning are overcome and record these on the PEP
- Make sure that the LAC are prioritised in support arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting at home
- Work closely with other agencies, sharing information as appropriate
- Ensure that there are well supported plans for transitions at the end of each academic year, to the next key stage and when they leave our setting either to go to another school or if they become adopted
- Attend training as needed
- Keep the Advisory Board and SLT up to date with the needs, issues and outcomes for LAC via a termly report and any other necessary communication
- Ensure statutory funding (pupil premium plus) is spent effectively and contributes to rapidly improving the education of all LAC in the school

#### All Staff

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- Be familiar with 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, as appropriate;
- 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

#### Advisory Board

- Ensure that the needs and outcomes of LAC are incorporated in policy decisions wherever relevant

- Ensure the school's work with LAC is reviewed annually to the Advisory Board
- Champion the needs of Looked After Children and undertake appropriate training as needed

### Senior Leadership Team

- Ensure that the needs of LAC are taken into account at a school management level
- Support the designated teacher in carrying out their role and regularly review their impact.
- Listen and take into account the views of the LAC
- Regularly review provision and outcomes for LAC
- Follow guidance and statutory guidance on admissions, exclusions etc
- Prioritise LAC in resource decisions and ensure that resources directly targeted at LAC (pupil premium plus, money for SEN etc) are used directly for them
- Work with, support and challenge wider partnerships in providing the best possible educational provision and support for LAC
- Ensure LAC have access to the best of what the school has to offer and that barriers to do with being in care which might make this difficult are overcome
- Promote multi agency working and solution focused child centred approach
- Ensure the outcomes for LAC are tracked, monitored and appropriate interventions are put in place and included in termly PEPs

### Virtual School

We will work with our virtual school so they will provide:

- Support and leadership to our school to ensure that our LAC access high quality learning and support, which meets their needs in a timely way and leads them on a long-term education, training and employment pathway
- Strategic leadership to ensure there are high aspirations for LAC's education and the right provision, policies and protocols are in place to support them
- Direct, targeted support for LAC
- Training about education issues for all those who work with our LAC
- Specialist support to our school – e.g. Multi agency working, PEP planning, preventing exclusions and promoting inclusion
- Support and advice to our LAC's social workers, foster carers and other agencies
- Advice to other local authorities who have LAC educated in our school
- Data and analysis of outcome for LAC in our local authority

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know basis"
- The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting.
- Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

## **RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING**

- The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children and Young People 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 or Young Person 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/YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that 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 or Young Person 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.

## **DEALING WITH KEY CHALLENGES**

### Admissions

- We will act in accordance with the law and admissions codes as they apply to schools, giving timely access to Looked After Children
- Work with the local authority and other authorities to plan for admissions
- If appropriate, ensure pre-admission professionals and appropriate PEP meetings are held and that arrangements are in place to support the child starting a new school
- Ensure the PEP is reviewed within 28 days of admission

### Access to appropriate curriculum

- Looked After Children will have access to the best curriculum that we can offer. We will work proactively with others to ensure that the curriculum is developed to meet their needs.

### Access to support for LAC with Special Educational Needs

- We will work proactively to ensure children's needs are assessed early and their needs met.
- The designated teacher will take the lead in ensuring support or assessment from other agencies is in place
- We expect, direct, clear, timely advice from professionals, including attendance at meetings

### Preventing exclusion and improving attendance

- The Virtual School will be informed immediately of any fixed term exclusions by email
- Where attendance is falling or low, the school will work together with other agencies, including the Virtual School, to address the underlying issues and ensure a plan is in the PEP
- The school will work with other agencies (including foster carers, social workers, psychology services and Virtual School) on prevention strategies. The school will seek, accept and be provided with support in a timely manner according to the availability of resources (including the Virtual School) if a pattern of exclusion is developing and ensure plans to address issues are in the PEP
- Funding and resources already in the school's budget to prevent exclusion (e.g. pupil premium plus) will be used to promote inclusion and prevent exclusion

- Our aim is to never exclude a Looked After Child
- Permanent exclusion will only occur when all other options have been exhausted
- Where a permanent exclusion can be anticipated because of a developing pattern of behaviour, alternatives will be found before this occurs
- If there is a permanent exclusion or managed transfer, we will not take a child off role until a new placement is found. We will take a lead in working with others to find a high-quality alternative placement

### Communication and Sharing information

- We will share attendance, exclusion, target setting, achievement data and plans with relevant agencies including the Virtual School
- We will respond to requests marked urgent within 24 hours and within an hour in emergencies
- In other cases, we will adhere to statutory or agreed timescales

### 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.
- Parent evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

### Multi-agency working

- We will work proactively with other agencies to meet the needs of Looked After Children and will contribute to the development of these services through receiving and contributing to training

### Supporting Transitions

- The designated teacher from the next education placement will be invited to the professionals and PEP meetings in our school
- Our designated teacher will attend professionals and PEP meetings in the new placement as requested and appropriate

### Working with other Local Authorities

- We will expect other LAs to provide support for their LAC in our school, including planning, funding and support. This will include all the stipulations of this policy with a particular emphasis:
  - Pre-planning for new education placements. Where there are issues, a pre-placement admissions meeting should be held with all professionals involved
  - Continuing financial support
  - Continuing professional support via the PEP process

**Review due:** September 2024