

Naunton Park Primary School
Looked After Children Policy

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Contents

1. Definition
2. Principles
3. Responsibilities of different members of staff
4. Record keeping and information sharing
5. Exclusions
6. Staff Development and Training
7. Admission Arrangements
8. Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities Statement

1. Definition

'Looked After Children' (LAC) or 'Child in Care' (CIC) is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

Naunton Park Primary School recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the Governing Body endorse Gloucestershire County Council policy and welcomes Looked After Children who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Gloucestershire.

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement which could lead to leaving school without formal qualifications and not accessing further education. Nationally, Looked After Children (LAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances.

Naunton Park Primary School recognises that Looked After Children (LAC) can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting and is committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. Naunton Park Primary School recognises that LAC may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Naunton Park Primary School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Looked After Child can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that LAC are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

2. Principles

Naunton Park Primary School's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC)is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all LAC.
- All LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require. To be reviewed 3 times a year.
- Additional funding to support LAC will be sought through the appropriate route by the Designated Teacher and in discussion with the class teacher used to provide additional support for the child/children.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity during the child's education where possible.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.

3. Responsibilities of different members of staff

The responsibility of the Headteacher:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Ensure that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of looked After Children to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

The responsibility of the Governing Body:

- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out their responsibilities.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher (if not the Headteacher) and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.
- Receive a termly report setting out:
    1. The number of Looked After Children on the school's roll
    2. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
    3. The destinations of LAC who leave the school
    4. Their attendance as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
    5. Their Teacher Assessment as a discrete group compared to other pupils
    6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

The role/responsibility of the Designated Teacher:

The Designated Teacher should ensure a smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the electronic Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan for the transition in consultation with the child's Social Worker and make arrangements to ensure their needs are identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.

The PEP should be completed with the child, the Social Worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan Reviews.

An up-to-date record of LAC in school should be maintained, including those in the care of other authorities, ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required. The Designated Teacher should identify a member of staff that each LAC can talk to, based on the child's own wishes.

Attendance and academic progress should be tracked and any academic support for the LAC that is necessary within the school needs coordinating as well as pastoral support. All concerned staff should be aware of the difficulties and disadvantage LACs may face. Inclusion should be promoted in all areas of life and LAC should be encouraged to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.

The Designated Teacher must establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies, ensuring confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis. It is the Designated Teacher's responsibility to set up meetings with relevant parties when necessary, ensuring the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school, be it a new school or transition to the next phase.

The Designated teacher should attend training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Looked After Children.

The Responsibility of all staff:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children (LAC), as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively. Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC to achieve stability and success within school. Promote the self-esteem of all LAC
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC.

4. Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children (LAC) in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to staff.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated within 20 school days of the LAC 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 LAC 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.

5. Exclusions

Naunton Park Primary School recognises that Looked After Children (LAC) can be 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 pupil to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in a Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent exclusion from happening.

6. 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 (LAC).

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, those working at a Greater Depth or those having learning or physical needs. Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision in any form will be informed of those LAC who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

7. Admission Arrangements

The school recognises that Looked After Children (LAC) are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the school's oversubscription criteria.

8. Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is scaffolded and adapted for the performance of all groups and individuals. Naunton Park Primary School is committed to creating a positive, inclusive climate that will enable everyone to work free from intimidation and harassment to achieve their full potential.