

# **BADDOW HALL INFANT SCHOOL**

## **Looked After Children Policy**



Ratified by Governing Body:

Date: October 2023

Signed: Nick Banister-Dudley

Review date: October 2024

## Definition

“Looked After” 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.

This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

Responsible Governor: Nick Banister-Dudley

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lesley Schlanker

Looked After Children Designated Lead: Faye Currie

Baddow Hall Infant School recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorses the local authority policy and welcomes LAC who may be looked after by the local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Essex.

The school’s approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained designated teacher is appointed who will be responsible for all Looked After Children.
- All Looked After Children 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 support they require.
- 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.
- 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.

## Rationale

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 (LAC) are particularly vulnerable to under achievement. Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared to their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Baddow Hall Infant School recognises that LAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and is committed to ensuring that 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. Baddow Hall Infant School recognises LAC may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Baddow Hall Infant School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every LAC 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 wellbeing.

### **Responsibility of the Head teacher**

- Identify a Looked After Children Designated Lead whose role is set out below.
- In the event of the above person being absent or unable to undertake the role the responsibilities will be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectation.
- Report on progress, attendance and conduct of LAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

### **Responsibility of the Governing Body**

- Ensure that all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children:
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children in England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC.
- Allocated resources to meet the needs of LAC.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Looked After Children Designated Lead, and that that individual is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Looked After Children Designated Lead and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC are recognised and met.

Receive a termly report setting out:

- The number of looked-after pupils on the school roll (if any).
- Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- Their teacher assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.

- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
- The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- 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 of the Looked After Children Designated Lead**

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements.
- Ensure that the PEP is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the LAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Looked After Children Designated Lead, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Coordinate any support for the LAC that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as subject leaders to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and, (if the pupil changes school), to the new school.
- Be proactive in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware that a high percentage of LAC say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure attendance is monitored.

- Attend training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding LAC.

### **The responsibilities of all staff**

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC.
- Maintain LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Looked After Children Designated Lead'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.
- Be aware that a high percentage of LAC say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with school policy.

### **Confidentiality**

Information on LAC will be shared with school staff on a need to know basis.

The Looked After Children Designated Lead will discuss what information is shared with which staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person and other parties, completed confidentiality is to be maintained.

### **Record keeping and information sharing**

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

A PEP will be initiated within 20 school days of the LAC starting at the school and 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 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 Looked after Children are 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**

Baddow Hall 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 child to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

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

Please refer to the Behaviour Policy for more information.

### **Staff development and training**

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Looked After Children Designated Lead is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked After Children.

Other staff will receive training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked After Children, including those who are under achieving 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 and Disability 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.

### **Support and resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Looked After Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

### **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. Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership.

### **Admission arrangements**

We recognise that, due to care arrangements, Looked After Children 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 schools recognises that Looked After Children are an excepted group and will prioritise these children in the school's over subscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

### **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 LAC including social care teams, the Educational Psychologist, Health Services, EWMHS and any other relevant service.

### **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 differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Baddow Hall Infant School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.