



LEARNING CHANGES LIVES

Children Looked After Policy

Approved by the
Local Governing Body
January 2023

Next review
January 2024

POLICY

Introduction

The Governing Body of Quest Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This Governing Body recognises that, nationally, there is a considerable gap in the educational achievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in “Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2010) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Context and Rationale

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term ‘**in care**’ refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘**accommodated**’ by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be ‘**Children Looked After**’ (CLA). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

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

Children who are subject to special guardianship or adopted are not looked after.

The governing body of Quest Primary 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 Senior Leader as Designated Teacher for CLA.
- Personal Education Plans for all CLA.
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect CLA.
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

Aim

To provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and promotes the abilities and potential of all children.

To bring the educational achievements of our Children Looked After (CLA) nearer to those of their peers.

To support our Children Looked After (CLA) 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 identify our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Children Looked After (CLA).

Asking the question '**Would this be good enough for my child?**' We will work with Croydon Virtual School and Virtual Schools for students from other Local Authorities, to ensure that CLA receive the full support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

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

To ensure that pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision. Our school's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children Looked After (CLA) is based on the following principles:

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

Responsibility of the Head of School

- Identify a designated teacher for CLA, whose role is set out below. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated teacher not be available to undertake these legal duties.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admissions progress, attendance, exclusions, and attainment of CLA and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related policies.

Responsibility of the Governing Body Name of Nominated Governor: Tom Sedgwick

The Governing Body will:

- Identify a Governor for CLA who links with the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CLA.
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs of all its CLA regardless of the originating authority (no names).
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of CLA.
- Review annually the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA
- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support to fulfil their role.
- In partnership with the Head of School, ensure that, through their training and development, the Designated Teacher 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 CLA.

- Governing bodies and the SLT should make sure that the Designated Teacher 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 of School, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the Designated Teacher.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher Name of Designated Teacher: Jo Stawman

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 and 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 CLA. They need to be able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning of these children.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Know who all the CLA are in school and ensuring that availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- Attend relevant training about CLA and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CLA
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CLA should learn
- Help school staff understand the issues that affect the learning of CLA such as differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning.
- Make sure that CLA are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Remove the barriers to learning for CLA.
- Ensure any CLA 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.
- Develop personalised learning packages for CLA in conjunction with the relevant teaching staff.
- Ensure that the CLA in their school have a voice in setting learning targets for themselves.
- Champion for CLA.
- Lead on developing and implementing the PEP within the school. The social worker is responsible for initiating the PEP process completing the front page of the PEP form.
- Monitor the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved.
- Ensure the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred without delay.
- Liaise with the Virtual School in all aspects of the CLA progress and support.
- Convene urgent multi-agency meetings if a CLA is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Arrange for a mentor or key worker to whom the young person can talk to. Arranging for the CLA to be supported by its peers.
- Produce 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 CLA. 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 CLA.

For more information please see:

The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children – Statutory guidance for school governing bodies. <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01046-2009BKT-EN.PDF>

Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked after Children)

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-00523-2009.pdf>

Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools – Guidance for Schools

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01047-2009.pdf>

Improving the attainment of looked after young people in secondary schools – Guidance for Schools

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01048-2009.pdf>

Roles and Responsibilities of all Staff

- Ensure that any child is supported sensitively, and that confidentiality is maintained.
- 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 looked after's request that they should 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 is stigmatised in any way.
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child to achieve stability within the school setting.
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA.
- Positively promote the self-esteem of CLA.

Admission to School

Children Looked After are very high on our admission criteria and we expect them to have a planned admission to our school. We will seek to admit these children after meeting the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals, to identify needs, support mechanisms and allow the child to prepare to enter the school.

Confidentiality

Information on CLA will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know basis.' The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which staff at the PEP meeting or initial meetings with the social worker and carer. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained. This policy links with several other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them:

- The school code of conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

The school will champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Further Information

Support for Children Looked After by Croydon is provided by the Croydon's Virtual School. They may also be able to give advice about Children Looked After by other boroughs in the school.

Virtual School
Children, Young People and Education
4th Floor, Zone A,
Bernard Weatherill House,
8 Mint Walk,
Croydon CR0 1EA

Tel – 02087266000 extension 88817

Email – Virtualschool@croydon.gov.uk

Further guidance can be found in Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (February 2018)

***Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion.**

Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school) within 48 hours of starting at school

Social Worker initiates the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting. A copy of the form is sent to the school (ideally electronically) to enable completion of educational data prior to the meeting

PEP meeting takes place within 20 school days of child becoming looked after or entering school. This should involve the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person. A date is set for the next PEP meeting in 6 months time.

Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.



***Note: This process is for Children who are looked after by Croydon - other authorities may have slightly different procedures on PEP completion as well as a different PEP format.**

Croydon Virtual School EPEP's are completed online at: epeponline.co.uk

Advice and support can be found via the helpdesk on:0333 772 0944