



## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY - LAC

### Aim

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

### Statement of intent

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life.

The LA has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what our school will do to help the LA with its duty.

### Definition

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| <b>Child</b>                                     | Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.   |
| <b>Missing child</b>                             | A child reported as missing to the Police by their family or carers.  |
| <b>Absent Child</b>                              | A child not at a place where they are expected or required to be.   |
| <b>Child Looked After</b>                        | A child who is looked after by a local authority by reason of a Care Order, or accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989   |
| <b>Away from placement without authorisation</b> | A Child Looked After whose whereabouts are known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the <i>carer has concerns or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the Police.</i> |
| <b>Responsible local authority</b>               | The local authority that is responsible for a Child Looked After's care and care planning.  |
| <b>Host local authority</b>                      | The local authority in which a Child Looked After is placed when placed outside of the responsible local authority's area.  |
| <b>Absconded</b>                                 | When a missing child is subject to a court order, such as curfew or bail conditions.  |

N.B. For the purposes of this protocol a child who has run away or who is missing will be defined as a missing child when the episode has been reported to the Police.

The Police categories of missing do NOT incorporate Children Looked After who are 'away from placement without authorisation'.

'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 (LAC).

**Governor Responsible:** Sadiq Darwan

**Designated Lead:** Zohra Umarji

Rida Girls High 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 considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers including;

### **Key Principles**

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After Children (LAC)
- 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 the 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, LAC are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, 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. 75% of LAC leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to

further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Rida Girls High 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. Rida Girls High 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.

Rida Girls High 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 can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

### **Accommodated (Section 20)**

This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility

### **In Care**

A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

### **Remanded/detained**

A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:-

- An emergency protection order.
- Removed by police using their powers of protection.
- Remanded by a court following criminal charges.
- A court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

Looked After Children may 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.
- having a need to be very private, which makes them an extremely vulnerable in terms of education and future life-chances.

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life- chances.

## **Roles and Responsibility of the Head teacher**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below.
- It is essential 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. (For more information, please refer to the School's Children Missing In Education policy)
- 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.

## **Roles and 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 LAC 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 Looked After Children.
- be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names).
- 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 his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.
- Nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body. ( These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons).
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

Receive a termly report setting out:

1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
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.

## **Roles and responsibilities the Designated Teacher**

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan 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 if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.

- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked After Children 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 Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff 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. Provide carers with LAC Co-coordinators school mobile phone number for ease of contact.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage Looked After Children 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 Looked After Children.
- 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 a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Looked After Children.

### **Roles and responsibility of all staff**

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.
- 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;

### **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 of PEP**

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. In partnership with the child, (where appropriate) their carers, social worker, any other supporting professionals involved as well as their biological parents, (where appropriate) each child's PEP is completed and reviewed on a termly basis.

This process is undertaken as follows:

- The social worker will inform the school of a child becoming 'Looked After' or of a child, who is already 'Looked After' joining the school.
- The social worker will share any relevant information with the Headteacher / Designated Teacher as well as copies of any relevant reports. This includes the previous PEP, where one exists.
- A date for the completion of an initial PEP will be set.
- A copy of the new PEP form will be sent to the school by the social worker so they can complete the educational data and targets sections as well as add any relevant details about the school and the child's support / teaching arrangements.
- 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. This meeting will involve the social worker, Designated Teacher (as well as other staff if appropriate), the child's carer, any other supporting professionals and the young person themselves, if appropriate.  
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. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be Linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months  
The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.  
At the end of the meeting a date will be set for the next PEP meeting. (N.B – Whilst the child is considered 'Looked After', these meetings take place on termly basis).
- The completed PEP will sent to the social worker, who will take it to the child's statutory review meeting and discuss it within the wider context of the child's life.
- The social worker will send the PEP to the Virtual School, LAC team, carers and parents.
- The school will continue to implement, monitor and review the identified actions, targets and interventions as well as track the child's overall progress within school.

Effective and high quality PEPs should:

- Be an accurate and comprehensive record of the child's experiences, progress and achievement – social, emotional and academic.
- Be linked to information recorded in other education plans. These include a statement of special educational need / EHCP plan; targets set for children recorded at an SEN Support level; strategies and targets identified in a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) or Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP).
- Identify developmental and educational needs, (short and long term) in relation to a child's required need to develop specific skills, knowledge, concepts and experiences.
- Set short term targets with clear progress measures identified against each target / area of need.
- Set long term plans and identify future aspirations, e.g. in relation to public examinations and future career plans.

- Document identified actions for specific individuals being used to support the achievement of agreed targets.
- Identify whether the child is eligible for the Pupil Premium and if so how this allowance will be used to support the targets set in the PEP.

### **Pupil Voice**

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the PEP by the Designated Teacher to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer pre-pares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

### **Exclusions**

Rida Girls High 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 young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's Personal Education Plan 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 an exclusion from happening.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

### **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.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked After Children, including those who are underachieving 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 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 evening as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

### **Admission arrangements**

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC 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 school recognises that Looked After children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Looked After Children in the school's oversubscription 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 Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

### **Racial Equality & 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. St. Michael's 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.