

Chesnut Lodge School Policy

Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after

At Chesnut Lodge we adhere to the premise that looked after children (LAC) and previously looked after pupils (PLAC) should have the right to expect the same outcomes we want for every child. We aim for all pupils regardless of their family and legal circumstances, or the local authority they are in care with, to achieve high educational standards and reach their potential.

We acknowledge that school should be a strong, supportive and safe environment for looked after and previously looked after pupils and we endeavour to support all our children and young people through what may be a traumatic and difficult period in their lives. We recognise that pupils may be emotionally vulnerable and staff need to be aware and sensitive to this, whilst maintaining high aspirations, ensuring that they provide the highest level of education for all pupils. In our aspiration for Looked After and Previously Looked after Children we adhere to the premise, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

Chesnut Lodge School believes that by working with Halton and other local authorities who are acting as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of looked after children.

As a school, we aim:

- To provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support the emotional and personal development of all our children in care and PLAC and where necessary provide any additional pastoral support.
- To ensure that the educational attainments of our Children in Care and PLAC is in line, or better than, those of their peers.
- To ensure full access to education appropriate to their age, needs, ability and emotional understanding. This includes access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum.
- To provide a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of all Looked after Children and for those children previously looked-after.
- To ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for reviewing and monitoring the progress of LAC and PLAC and ensure appropriate use of pupil Premium Plus funding
- To implement the principles and practice as outlined in the following legislation:

1. *The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children 02/18*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

2. *Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools 10/19*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-effective-use-and-accountability>

3. *Promoting the Education of Looked After Children 02/18*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-afterchildren>

4. *Section 52, Children Act 2004* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/52>

5. *Children's Act 1989* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

Things to be aware of:

Looked after Children and those children previously looked-after may (or may not) have some issues regarding their previous care, transition or emotional stability which can make them more vulnerable and affect future life chances. It is important that trusted adults working with our looked after children and PLAC recognise the potential for:

- low self esteem

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- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- poor attachments to others
- being bullied or bullying others
- being prone to mental health issues
- being isolated with few friends
- concerns regarding behaviour
- needing to be very private

In order to address these and provide the necessary support all settings are required to have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care and PLAC who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate), social workers and health on a wide variety of educational and care issues.

In our school the Designated Teacher is Anne Butchard (Deputy)

Whole school approach:

We ensure that:

- All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care and PLAC by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to compete tasks and responsibilities.
- The school celebrates the achievements of Children in Care and previously looked after children.
- Teachers have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- The young person has a special, trusted adult in school that is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- There is be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the Child in Care or PLAC from school.
- All teachers within the school are made aware of the needs of Children in Care and PLAC and actively promote their best interests.
- Adults in school are sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status.
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established.
- Systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children in Care and PLAC.
- The designated teacher promotes positive messages about behaviour and achievement within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies, and that high educational expectations are maintained.
- The whole school provides a nurturing environment and that named staff within school have undergone additional training in nurturing approaches and understanding of trauma and attachment to help to support Children in Care and PLAC.
- Pupils are offered additional Nurture intervention if required through our ongoing programme.
- Children in Care and PLAC are supported to engage in out of school hours learning.
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- Staff support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance.
- Staff are aware that being or becoming ' Child in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given.
- Teachers are aware of a variety of emotional issues and trauma that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process, including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem.

- Teachers are aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.

The designated teacher will:

- Be an advocate for Looked after Children and for those children previously looked-after.
- Be a central point of contact for carers and appropriate agencies.
- Maintain a register of all looked after children, including those from other local authorities. This will include a record of:
 1. Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 2. Type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential.
 3. Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 4. Daily contact and telephone numbers where appropriate e.g. name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
 5. Share, when appropriate, Child Protection/disability information.
 6. Baseline information, ongoing academic progress and all test results.
 7. Comparative peer group academic data.
 8. Details of any additional support being received.
- Inform named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.
- Ensure that there is an up to date and effective Personal Education Plan for each child which includes appropriate and challenging educational targets ensuring academic progress. The relevant local authority format should be used. This must be compatible with the child's care plan and form part of any other school plan, e.g. Education, Health and Care Plan, Transition Plan, targets tree etc.
- Ensure that within the PEP it is evident how the Pupil Premium Plus funding is being spent and the impact of this additional funding on the child and their outcomes.
- Ensure that the educational achievement is fully promoted by making a positive difference in ensuring that their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
- Ensure that they attend care planning meetings on each child and/or always prepare a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their education for these meetings.
- Ensure that they prepare a written report for the statutory looked after children's reviews.

The whole school staff group will ensure:

That looked after children are not discriminated against in terms of attendance, truancy and exclusions. In addition, the Designated Teacher will ensure that the appropriate senior managers are made aware of any mitigating circumstances that need to be considered before considering a sanction for the child/young person.

- Ensure that should a looked after child be identified as at risk of exclusion, contact is made with Sharon Williams; Virtual School Head for Children in Care (0151 5117391) and David Purcell; Education Welfare Officer (0151 5117357) immediately in an effort to avoid this from happening and to discuss alternatives
- Coordinate support for the child in school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary. This includes acting as a point of contact for staff and source of advice
- Looked after children and for those children previously looked-after are prioritised for access to any appropriate additional in-school and external support services available. This will include amongst others priority access to Education Psychology Service, SEN Service, CAMHS Tier 2, Education Welfare Service, additional tutoring, and mentor support.
- That on admission or transfer, all relevant information is obtained at the outset and that when new to the school a smooth and welcome induction is in place for the child and carer.

- That systems are in place, to keep staff up to date and informed about looked after children and for those children previously looked-after within the school.
- Confidentiality for individual children is maintained and only share personal information on a need to know basis.
- That the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Looked After Children and for those children previously looked-after are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- Speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- That they seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- That any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA
- That looked after children and those children previously looked-after are listened to and have access to support and counselling in school. If appropriate that the child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (not necessarily the designated teacher but someone that the child knows well)
- That as the designated teacher, they participate in appropriate training provided and attend Designated Teacher network meetings.

Confidentiality:

- Information on looked after children and for those children previously looked-after 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.

Training:

- The Head Teacher or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The designated teacher will ensure that virtual school have access to and consider termly information on the progress and educational needs of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after.
- The DT should record any changes in home placements, PEP completion dates, reviews and interventions to raise achievement.
- The school will monitor and evaluate the progress made by individuals and all the children using the same criteria used for other children in the peer group.
- The report will also include intervention strategies such as study support, learning mentor support, home contracts, Pastoral Support Plans, referrals to the Education Support Service for looked after children, counselling support, etc. and information about non-academic progress in extracurricular activities.
- The report will also include training undertaken by the designated teacher, work with LA Virtual School Heads or their equivalents, and multi-agency working.
- The school will ensure that all school policies consider the needs of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after.

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- These policies, for example, Exclusion/admission, access to school support systems, will also highlight how the school supports/responds to the needs of looked after children and for those children previously looked-after, compared to their peers.

Reviewed: Spring '21 by Anne Butchard

Due for review: Spring '23

Appendix

The PEP- taken from Children in Care and Previously Looked after Children- Halton LA Policy 2019

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) allows the social worker, residential staff/carer and Designated Teacher at the child's school or, where the child has no school place, the education service, in conjunction with the child, to set out what needs to happen to meet the educational needs of the child.

The Personal Education Plan should be initiated as part of the Care Plan before the child becomes a Child in Care (or within 10 working days in the case of an emergency placement), and be available for the first Children in Care Review meeting and all subsequent Children in Care Reviews.

All Children in Care must have a Care Plan, of which the PEP is an integral part. The PEP (pre-school age to 18) should be initiated as part of the Care Plan. It provides essential information to ensure that appropriate support is in place to enable the child to achieve the targets set. It is also a record of the child's leisure interests and educational achievement.

The Designated Teacher leads on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored, with the Virtual School Head having a quality assurance role.

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All of those involved in the PEP process at all stages should involve the child (according to understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent/carer and/or relevant family member.

The PEP is an evolving record, and arrangements for the flow of information to develop, review and update the PEP should be in place to ensure the VSH, Designated Teacher, carer and, where appropriate, child and parent have a copy of the latest version of the document. Virtual School Heads should make arrangements for PEPs to be reviewed each school term.

PEPs should:

- *Identify developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;*
- *Set short and long-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate;*
- *Include a record of planned actions, including milestones on homework, extra tuition and study support, that the school and others will take to promote the educational achievement of the child, based on an assessment of their educational needs;*
- *Include information on how the child's progress is to be rigorously monitored;*
- *Record details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to make sure personal education targets are met, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 in relation to English and mathematics, and at Key Stage 4 in achieving success in public examinations;*
- *Say what will happen, or is already happening, to put in place any additional support which may be required - e.g. possible action to support special educational needs involving the SENCO, educational psychologist, or local authority education services (information contained within a EHC plan does not have to be duplicated in the PEP, a reference is sufficient as long as the plans work together to meet overall needs);*
- *Set out information on what will happen or is already happening to identify and support any mental health needs relevant to the child's education;*
- *Set out how a child's aspiration and self-confidence is being nurtured, especially in consideration of longer-term goals towards further and higher education, work experience and career plans. Discussions about longer-term goals should start early and ideally well before Year 9 (age 13-14) at school. High aspirations are crucial to successful planning for the future. They should focus on the young person's strengths and capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve;*
- *Include the child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective;*
- *Be a record of the child's academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning activities (e.g. sporting, personal development);*
- *Provide information which helps all who are supporting the child's educational achievement to understand what works for them, helping to substitute for the role that parents might otherwise provide; and*
- *Have clear accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen.*

The Designated Teacher would normally have overall responsibility for leading the process of target setting for Children in Care in school, should monitor and track how their attainment progresses, and ensure that identified actions are put in place. The Designated Teacher will help the school and the local authority that looks after the child to decide what arrangements work best in the development and review of the PEP.

