



## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Summer 2016

Manager

**Mrs J G Chapman**

Review Date – Summer 2019

**Gayton Junior School** aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of all pupils in public care.

**Designated Teacher for LAC/CiC BECKY CLARKE**

**Governor with responsibility for LAC/CiC RACHEL BURNETT**

*This policy has been developed in consultation with Derby City Looked After Children and Care Leavers. See Appendix 1.*

The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC. We aim to contribute towards all Looked after Children/Children in Care to

- **Stay safe**
- **Be healthy**
- **Enjoy and achieve**
- **Make a positive contribution**
- **Achieve economic well being.**

**The aims of the school are to:**

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
- ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers, social workers of LAC pupils and the Virtual School for Children in Care are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

*See Appendix 2 - Roles and Responsibilities*

### **Who are Looked After Children?**

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 by the authority. 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 '**Looked After Children**' –LAC or '**Children in Care**' (CiC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

### **Admissions**

The Governing Body endorses council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC pupils.

### **Allocation of resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC/CiC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

### **Monitoring the progress of LAC**

The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 10 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement, attainment and progress of all Looked After pupils at regular intervals. LAC/CiC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the Reviewing Office, Social Worker or Designated Teacher. The young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

*See Appendix 3 - Derby City's guidance on PEP forms*

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the LAC/CiC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker, PEPs and attainment data. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC/CiC from other Local Authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC/CiC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

### **Staff Development**

We actively encourage and support staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to support LAC/CiC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness with school staff and Governors of issues associated with LA/CiC..

### **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC/CiC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

### **Links with external agencies/organisations**

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC/CiC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC/CiC:

- LAC/CiC teams
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- medical officers
- school nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social Care Workers/ Children's Practitioners/ Residential Child Care Worker
- Youth Offending Service
- Multi-Agency Teams.

### **LAC policy review and evaluation**

We consider the LAC/CiC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.

## APPENDIX 1

### Looked After Children/Children in Care say...

- “I would like to have a say as to whether I move school or not.”
- “Money should not be the most important thing when deciding if I should move schools.”
- “I would really like to have a chance to visit the school before I start.”
- “I would like my school work and achievements to be passed on to my new school and not forgotten about.”
- “I would have liked a buddy or peer mentor when I moved to my new school to help me get settled.”
- “We want to be treated as normal. We don’t want to be pitied or treated differently.”
- “I’d like to be able to choose a particular teacher to talk to – not just the designated teacher.”
- “I want to keep my life private. I don’t want people knowing everything about me unless I say so.”
- “I don’t want my teachers hearing embarrassing/personal details about me and my family at review meetings.”
- “I want my own copy of school reports and I want my parents to have a copy.”
- “The head of year is extremely important in passing on ‘need to know’ information to individual subject teachers.”

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Rationale for roles and responsibilities:**

Looked After Children/Children in Care – LAC/CiC - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements
- lack of involvement in extra curricular activities
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people and those on special Guardianship orders or Residence Orders.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. The Local Authority and Government aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by LAC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As Corporate Parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

#### **The Designated Teacher will:**

- be an advocate for LAC/CiC within school
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC/CiC on both the LAC/CiC and the rest of the school community
- know who are all the LAC/CiC in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details and attainment data from school record-keeping systems as required
- attend relevant training about LAC/CiC
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC/CiC, seeking advice from the Virtual School for Children in Care when appropriate.

- ensure that LAC/CiC receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- ensure that all LAC/CiC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 10 days of joining the school or of entering care (see Derby City's guidance on PEPs in Appendix 3) and ensure that the young person contributes to the Plan
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LA/CiC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC/CiC
- ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for LAC/CiC
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC/CiC transfers to another educational placement
- contribute information to LAC Reviews when required
- report to the Governing body on LAC/CiC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
  - the number of LAC/CiC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP in place
  - their attendance compared to other pupils
  - their attainment (including SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils
  - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
  - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC/CiC
- arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Space@Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to school
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC/CiC are six to eight times more likely to have a Statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population. The SEN Code of Practice is under review and the Education Health Care Plan will commence in September 2014.

### **Good practice suggests that all school staff will:**

- follow school procedures
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's/CiC's progress
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC/CiC
- positively promote the raising of a LAC's/CiC's self-esteem
- ensure any LAC/CiC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC/CiC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and Review meetings
- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC/CiC is experiencing difficulties
- give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

### **Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:**

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC/CiC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC/CiC
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC/CiC, a statutory post
- liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC/CiC are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC/CiC who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC/CiC equal access in respect of:
  - admission to school
  - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
  - out of school learning and extra curricular activities
  - work experience and careers guidance.
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC/CiC.
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC/CiC.

### **The Local Authority will:**

- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC/CiC
- ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other Derby City pupil
- ensure that LAC/CiC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible

- ensure that every LAC/CiC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Derby from another authority
- make sure that each LAC/CiC has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC/CiC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer
- identify a designated officer, the Virtual School Head Teacher, who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC/CiC
- be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC/CiC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs.

**Local Authority contact numbers for the Education of LAC/CiC are:**

Olwyn Mills – Virtual School Head Teacher for Children in Care

Telephone: 01332 640341

Mobile: 07812301004

Kate Cheetham – Specialist Education Officer for Children in Care

Telephone: 01332 641439

Mobile: 07812300954

Catherine Ward – Project Support Officer

Telephone: 01332 640346

Margaret Maughan – PEPs Administrator

Telephone: 01332641088

## APPENDIX 3 – PEP GUIDANCE

### (A) Initiating PEPs on Child's entry to care

- You will receive a PEP via secure email from the PEP Administrator with the first four pages completed. **(Personal Education Plan – Details p1-4)**
- Complete, update and amend the education sections of the PEP electronically prior to the PEP meeting.
- Discuss the plan with child/young person. Encourage and record their comments on the young Person's Views sheet.
- Inform the school nurse that the young person has entered public care or that a young person in care has joined the school.
- **Keep original completed PEP in child's school file and use as a working document.**
- Take a photocopy of completed PEP and discuss at the PEP meeting. Following the meeting amend as appropriate.
- Return the PEP electronically via secure email to [PEP@derby.gov.uk](mailto:PEP@derby.gov.uk) within two days of the PEP meeting
- The PEP Administrator will then distribute the PEP to all relevant people.

### (B) For Statutory Care Plan Review meetings

- It is a statutory requirement that PEPs are reviewed every six months.
- Before the Statutory Care Plan Review, update the PEP by
  - Recording any amendments
  - Reviewing targets and actions from last PEP meeting
  - Be sure to record any changes here as well as setting new targets and record any comments from child/young person
- Take a copy of the PEP (and any attached information) to the meeting or, if not attending, send it to the Reviewing Team.
- Put a copy of the **PEP- Plan/Review** form (and any updated information) with the original PEP in the child/young person's school file.

### Also consider

- If the child/young person has Special Educational Needs, you may wish to hold the PEP and MEP reviews together to minimise paperwork and time.
- If child/young person moves school forward the completed PEP, including the Review documents, along with the child's school file in the normal way to the receiving school.
- For fuller explanations please refer to the DfES "Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care".

**If you have any queries/problems please contact Margaret Maughan on 01332 641088 in the PEP/Reviewing Team.**