

Date September 2020

Review Date: September 2021



Olney Infant Academy Looked After Children Policy

At Olney Infant Academy the spiritual, social, moral and cultural (SMSC) development of all our children and being safe is paramount. We believe that the most important function of the school is to maintain an environment in which every member of the school is able to achieve success and self-fulfilment. There must be a total consistency of expectation that everyone (irrespective of gender, race or culture) should feel safe and secure, have empathy for all others, and place a high value upon individual achievement and personal development.

The Objective:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children (LAC) on roll at the school within an inclusive and supportive ethos and culture.

“The duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure they are able to achieve and reach their full potential”

Section 52 Children Act 2004

Definition of 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 is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. Looked after children fall into four main groups:

- 1) Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- 2) Children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- 3) Children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- 4) Children who are compulsorily accommodated.

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (Steph Hartwell)

Within School Systems:

- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated;
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the Personal Education Planning meeting.
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding where relevant is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced.

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people ‘in care’ and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.

- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, intervention programs, school councils, etc.;
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services, (CS) and birth parents where appropriate;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date, used on a 'need to know' basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- To track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium funding to accelerate progress;
- To intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy;
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them.
- To report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis (Olney Infant Academy protocol is to report at every meeting to a certain degree).
- To have completed the relevant training and CPD as appropriate.
- To support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with looked after children.

Work with Individual Looked After Children

- To discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To ensure that the Pupil Voice section of the relevant part of the Personal Education Plan is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the child are faithfully represented in the PEP;
- To ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new looked after child into the school.
- To develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies

Liaison:

- To liaise with the member of school staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register;
- To develop good communication with Milton Keynes Children's Services, (CS) staff so that the Personal Education Plan is supported by the child's Care Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services, (CS)

- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school role to the Virtual School as requested – attainment termly and attendance each month.

Training:

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.
- To attend relevant training/conferences and participate in area cluster groups for additional training and to share good practice.
- To develop knowledge of procedures by attending training events organised by the MK Children’s Services, (CS), the Virtual School or local Designated Teachers cluster groups,
- To keep informed of any updated guidance, procedures, Acts and recommendations.

Governors.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that the following roles and responsibilities are carried out effectively in order to fulfill the school’s duty regarding these pupils. A Governor has been allocated with a specific responsibility for Looked After Children in the school.

The role of the governor

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked after pupils in the school;
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions

The named governor should be satisfied that the school’s policies and procedures ensure that looked after pupils have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. One to One/ Group tuition;
- Additional education support;
- Extra-curricular activities; and
- The most effective use of the Pupil Premium to raise attainment.

The named Governor is encouraged to support the Quality Assurance Process for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with looked after children if offered to ensure and confirm the schools’ best practice.

Further roles and responsibilities of the Governor are:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises looked after children according to the DCSF

Admissions Code of Practice.

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for looked after children.
- Ensure there is a designated teacher for looked after children.
- Liaise with the headteacher, designated teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of looked after children are met.
- Receive regular reports from the designated teacher which should include the number of looked after children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan, their attendance, compared to other pupils, their attainment (SATs) compared to other pupils, the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) and the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of Admission to school, National Curriculum and examinations both academic and vocational, Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities.
- Annually, review the effective implementation of the school policy for looked after children.
- The named Governor will be expected to attend appropriate training and keep well-informed of the latest guidance, procedures, Acts and recommendations.

School Responsibility

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head of School and/or the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is in care only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head of School or the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

Key Roles and Responsibilities include:

- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of looked after children.
- Positively promote the raising of a looked after child's self-esteem.
- Ensure any looked after child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support Personal Education Plans, and review meetings.
- Respond positively to the request to be a looked after child's named person.
- Liaise with the designated teacher where a looked after child is experiencing difficulties.
- Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions as a last resort, in line with statutory regulations and Milton Keynes exclusion advice.
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals.
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals as appropriate.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility*1. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school induction will take place.

Involve the Young Person

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 Pupil Progress Provision Map by the Designated Teacher to inform any 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 prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

Communication with Other Agencies

Olney Infant Academy will ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. End of Year Reports) will be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School.

Schools and education and social work colleagues within Children's Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual or a Statement Review and a Personal Education Plan meeting or review.

It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if school is considering a change of course, there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision e.g.; behaviour or attendance.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Pupil Progress and Provision Map (PPPM) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of focus alongside quality first teaching the child will receive and include targets and associated action to improve the student performance or educational achievement. Areas for consideration will include:

- Achievement record (academic or otherwise);
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences);
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations);
- Educational data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages;
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any);
- Attendance;
- Behaviour;
- Use of Pupil Premium and impact.

The PPPM will be updated and reviewed termly or at the point of any major change and contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan.

The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all looked after children against the key indicators outlined above.

*1

Education Law defines who is a parent very widely. It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. This means it is possible for someone who does not have parental responsibility to be a 'parent' because they have care of the child in question for example the foster carer.
Ref

Section 576 Education Act 1996

Children Act 1989 (amended)

'If this were my child' (Local Government Information Unit 2003)

The Pupil, Premium: How schools are using the pupil premium to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils (DfE 2012)

Safeguarding:

At Olney Infant Academy, safeguarding and child protection is paramount and we are fully committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children. We believe that students have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse; where staff are vigilant for signs of any student in distress and are confident about applying the processes to avert and alleviate any such problems. If any behaviour is a concern in relation to safeguarding Olney Infant Academy procedures and processes will be followed at all times in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.