



# Policy to promote the welfare & achievements of Cared for Children & Adopted Children in school

March 2016

**Purpose**

To promote the educational attainment, achievement, progression and welfare of Looked After Children and Adopted children at Smithy Bridge. Some examples of how these areas are specifically promoted in school -

Attainment/Achievement

- Three assessment points each year will determine where the children are in terms of age related expectations
- PEP targets being linked to academic attainment
- The children are present at PEP meetings to discuss their learning
- Continual discussions with the Designated teacher and class teachers in terms of the attainment of LAC/Post-LAC
- Regular updates for parents & carers
- Achievements particularly celebrated through class or Achievement assemblies
- Extra teaching sessions before/after school to maximise potential

Progression

- Progress closely monitored by Designated Teacher
- Discussions in Pupil Progress meetings and relevant intervention
- PEP targets/Pupil Premium funding directly linked to maximise the chances of good or very good progress
- As well as seeing the class teacher, the Designated Teacher meet with parents/carers of LAC/Post-LAC on Parents' Evenings to discuss progress
- The Designated Governor reports regularly on the progress of LAC/Post-LAC children
- PEPs reviewed more regularly (every 4 months) than the statutory 6 months guidance

### Welfare

- Designated Teacher has developed good relationships with carers/parents and communicate regularly on any issues which may impact on welfare at school
- Teachers are aware and have been trained in certain areas (such as attachment issues) which may relate to LAC/Post-LAC – this shared knowledge encourages staff to ‘look out for’ the welfare of the children as ‘corporate parents’
- Extra sessions before or after school are designed to match need – these can be academic or sessions to promote welfare such as social skills sessions or life story work
- School subscription to ‘Adoption UK’ where staff can educate themselves on Adoption issues

There are currently 2 LAC (Rochdale Placing Authority and 4 ‘Post-LAC’ (Adopted) children in school (March 2016).

### **LAC**

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Looked After Children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers, which can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Looked After Children progressing to Higher Education and following progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being. For example, 34% of the general population go on to study at university but only 6% of Rochdale LAC children do (7% nationally).

In November 2004 Channel 4 Dispatches Programme investigated standards of Care and Education for looked after children.

- Some Children had no regular means to purchase essential items such as clothes/toiletries.
- Three in five children leave the care system with no qualifications at all.
- One in five children in residential care becomes homeless after five years.
- One in three of the prison population in 2004 have been in care.
- Tragically some children don’t make it at all with approximately 60 children dying in children’s homes each year.
- The system fails thousands of vulnerable children every year

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).

## Post-LAC

Children who have been adopted on or after 30/12/2005 and were formerly a LAC are also eligible for Pupil Premium Plus funding. **School realise that although no longer LAC, they will still be dealing with many issues due to their history. Therefore, Post-LAC are an integral part of this policy and will also be closely monitored by school.** The designated teacher has enrolled the school as an associate membership of 'Adoption UK' and has ordered specific materials to help the work with adopted children and their families.

The welfare, attainment, achievement and progress are closely monitored in school. A clear message has been disseminated that it is everyone's responsibility in school to help these children to fulfil their potential in all areas.

All staff working with these young people are aware that they are LAC/Post-LAC and in the absence of staff, information regarding the child's circumstances will be shared with the teacher covering the class.

In working together with Social Workers and other agencies, clear records and targets are kept in relation to LAC children. PEPs are collaboratively written and the Designated Teacher attends all relevant meetings including PEP meetings, LAC reviews and Care Planning meetings.

## Admissions

The Governing Body of Smithy Bridge Primary School will ensure that Looked After Children are prioritised in accordance with the school's admission procedures.

On admission, all records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held ASAP with carer/parent/Social Worker/Agencies. A date will be

agreed for a Personal Education Plan meeting, taking reference to statutory timescales. An appropriate school induction will take place.

**The Designated Teacher for LAC is Mark Brown.**

At Smithy Bridge Primary School we are committed to ensuring that the designated teacher and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Undergo any relevant training eg. knowledge of legislation/statutory expectations and cascade to staff
- Ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by LAC/Post-LAC and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them
- Organise training for staff on specific issues eg. Attachment
- Inform members of staff of the general educational needs of LAC/Post-LAC and to promote the involvement of these children in all activities, including extra-curricular
- Act as an advocate for the children
- Develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, Social Workers and Christopher Tyler (Virtual Head for Rochdale)
- Hold a supervisory brief for all LAC/Post-LAC eg. ensure all relevant education and care information is available and kept up to date
- Monitor the progress of the children in order to inform the school's development and provision/intervention planning, thereby ensuring that the attainment 'gap' is closing
- Have an overview of how specific resources (particularly the Pupil Premium Plus funding) are used to close the gap for each individual child
- Intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement or absences
- Report annually to the Governing Body and ensure that Governors are fully aware of how school is striving to maximise the potential of all LAC/Post-LAC
- Attend all relevant meetings related to LAC/Post-LAC including 3 network meetings per year with other Designated teachers in Rochdale to share good practice.
- Work with IROs and outside agencies closely
- Ensure that PEPs are completed and reviewed in collaboration with the Social Worker and other agencies
- Enable the children to contribute to educational aspects of their Care Plan and PEP documents
- Ensure there is positive communication and work closely with carers/parents of LAC/Post-LAC
- Monitor and track progress – there are three assessment points during the year. Progress will be looked at and linked to PEPs and use of the Pupil

Premium funding. LAC/Post LAC will be tracked as a discrete, vulnerable group within whole school data

- Forward any relevant information on current attainment and progress to the Virtual School

## **Governance**

The name of the Governor with special responsibility for LAC/Post-LAC is **Andreas Decoza**

Andreas has a huge amount of experience working with LAC children and is Director of Care for Alliance Care & Education. Andreas is a qualified, registered OFSTED Responsible Individual for Children's Homes.

The Designated Governor will ensure reporting to the Governing Body on an annual basis

- Comparison of attainment and progress compared with age related expectations
- Attendance issues
- Any exclusions
- Pupil destinations
- Pupil Premium Plus spending and impact

The named Governor has developed a strong link with the Designated Teacher and has had several meetings to discuss ways forward. He has produces a detailed Link Governor report each year.

The Designated Governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that LAC/Post-LAC have equal access to

- Full curriculum
- Extra-curricular activities
- Additional educational support as required
- Ongoing training to meet the needs of the LAC

## **Involving the Young Person**

We feel it is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances – how this is shared with them depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, Social Worker and carers are working together to promote their education.

An informal consultation will be held with the children at least every month with either the Designated Teacher or the Pastoral Manager, Mrs Young. Any concerns or issues will then be addressed through the appropriate channels.

### **Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures**

Each LAC will have a Care Plan including a PEP. School will play an active role in contributing to those areas of the PEP which are education related eg.

- SMART target setting
- How additional resources are being utilised to meet educational targets
- Attendance
- Involvement in Extra-Curricular Activities
- Special Educational Needs
- Long term plans and aspirations

The PEP will be updated every term, as part of the statutory reviewing process carried out by the Social Worker and as overseen by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

The designated governor will ensure termly reporting to the Governing Body on the attainment and progress of all LAC/Post-LAC (anonymously).

### **Pupil Premium Plus**

LAC/Post-LAC children receive more funding than Pupil Premium children. The designated teacher liaises very closely with the Business Manager regarding the Pupil Premium spending. A very detailed spreadsheet is kept and updated regularly, recording how we are spending the funding for maximum impact. A summary is also published on the website.

The Designated Teacher also liaises closely with the carers/parents and has on-going conversations on how they think the money could be utilised.

Examples of spending include

- Extra Maths & literacy lessons before/after school
- Extra 'Social Skills' sessions before school
- Homework Club
- Subsidised extra-curricular clubs
- Letterbox Club subscriptions
- Residential visits
- Music Lessons
- Youth Club
- Educational Psychologist assessments

- Attachment training for staff
- Carers' Contingency

This policy was approved by Governors on 01.02.15

This policy was reviewed on 21.03.16

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect any changes in current legislation.