Keep Hatch Primary School

Looked After Children Policy

At the heart of our school vision are our core values of Aspire, Believe and Achieve.

Introduction

Keep Hatch Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes.

We recognise that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and we are committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Guidance On The Education Of Looked After Children" (May 2000) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 . Children who are "looked after" may be "Accommodated ", "In Care" or "remanded/ detained" as follows:

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 or a court directing care for up to six months.

Looked After Children may (or may not) 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
- Have a need to be very private.

This makes Looked After Children an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. Keep Hatch Primary School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- A Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children.
- All staff to have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher:

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Mrs Cant.

The Designated Teacher should be an advocate for Looked After Children. When there are LAC new to the school, the Designated Teacher should ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status.

In addition, they should:

- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. 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. A flow chart showing PEP completion is found at the end of this policy.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- Ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA.

Roles and Responsibility of the all staff:

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- Be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;

- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- 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;
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children;
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children.

Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body:

- The governing body of this school will:
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names);
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children Liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- Support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are 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.

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.

Training:

The Headteacher 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 annually.