

## *Esher Church of England High School*

### **CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER POLICY**

<b>Status:</b>	<b>Current</b>
<b>Date of Review:</b>	<b>Summer 2022</b>
<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>Effectiveness Committee</b>
<b>Date of Approval:</b>	<b>Full Governors: 26 June 2019</b>

#### **Introduction**

Governing bodies have a legal duty to promote high standards for all children. The governors accept the Government's vision for children's services, Every Child Matters, and recognise that Esher High School has a vital role to play in promoting all children's and young people's social and emotional development.

All Children Looked After have distinct backgrounds, identities, aspirations and particular needs. Children Looked After as a group are no less able than their peers but they often underachieve. Their lives are often characterised by instability and many spend too much time out of school. As a result, many Children Looked After fall behind with school work and often do not receive the help and support they need to catch up.

The Governing body is aware of the duty on local authorities under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After.

#### **Definitions**

##### **Children Looked After**

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. They fall into 4 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 their protection
4. 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.

#### **Carer**

This includes foster carers, social workers and residential social workers

#### **Care order**

This means the local authority has gone to court to assume parental responsibility because the child has suffered or is likely to suffer 'significant harm'

#### **Objective**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care/looked after pupils within a supportive and inclusive school culture.

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

##### **The Headteacher and the Designated Teacher**

The Headteacher and Designated Teacher will inform staff of a child's care status and determine the extent to which information is shared with other members of staff.

## **The Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is the Assistant Headteacher with Responsibility for Whole School Inclusion.

The role of the Designated Teacher is to:

- maintain a register of children in public care and ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and that this information is kept up to date;
- ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children in public care and understand the need for high expectations and positive systems of support to overcome them;
- act as an advocate for children in public care;
- hold a supervisory brief and monitor the educational progress of all children who are in public care;
- supervise the smooth induction of a new child in public care into the school;
- act as a named person for the child;
- promote the involvement of these children in extra-curricular activities and intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school etc;
- ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and that there is school-based access to services and support is in place;
- liaise with the designated teacher for Child Protection to ensure appropriate safeguarding is considered and the Learning Support Coordinator to agree additional support if necessary;
- help co-ordinate education and Social Services Department review meetings so that the PEP can inform the child's Care Plan and enable the child to make a contribution to their Care Plan;
- attend or arrange for someone else to attend Social Services Department's planning meetings;
- act as advisor for other staff in the school and for governors on issues relevant to children in public care, especially in work around families, family trees and family values;
- ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies and individuals and report on the progress of all children in public care to Children Looked After Services;
- develop knowledge of Social Services Department and Education procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority and cascade training to staff as appropriate.

## **Governing Body Responsibility**

- Ensure governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Children Looked After
- Ensure there is a named Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and that they are enabled to carry out their responsibilities in relation to Children Looked After.
- Support the school in ensuring the needs of Children Looked After are met
- Nominate a governor to liaise with the Designated Teacher and report to the Governing Body

One governor with special responsibility for children in public care shall be named.

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- the number of children in public care in the school
- the test scores, attendance and exclusion rates of the discrete group, compared with those of other pupils.

The named governor will have knowledge of the status of the children in public care as well as having an overview of their educational needs and progress.

The Governing Body should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that children in public care have full access to:

- the National Curriculum;

- additional educational support;
- extra-curricular activities.

The Governors will assist the school in looking at whether policies and practice on behaviour, admissions, exclusions, attendance and special educational needs adequately address the needs of children in public care.

### **Confidentiality**

- The Headteacher and/or the Designated Teacher have responsibility for informing all teaching staff who are in contact with the child of their care status.
- As the initial contact of carers and other agencies with the school, the School Office staff including the Attendance officer will have knowledge of the child's care status.
- It is appropriate for support staff to have knowledge that the child is in public care when directly involved in the teaching of the child.
- Other staff may need to know if there are particular concerns that require a whole-school approach.
- In the event of staff absence, the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher or appropriate member of the pastoral team, e.g. Assistant Headteacher or Head of School, will decide if it is appropriate to inform staff covering for an absent colleague of a child's care status.
- In each case, the Headteacher and the Designated Teacher will determine the extent of the information shared. In every case, only information that is critical to the working relationship will be passed on to staff. Information shared with staff will be placed on the pupils file.

### **Admissions**

On admission, records will be requested from the previous school, where appropriate and a meeting held to inform the PEP.

### **Involving the Child**

The child will be consulted and involved in decisions about themselves according to their age and understanding.

A child will be made aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and understanding. The explanation will emphasise that the school, the Social Worker and all other adults who are working together to support their education.

### **Involving the parent(s) and carer(s)**

Esher High School recognises that support from home greatly assists a child's educational progress and the school aims to involve parents, carers and those with parental responsibility in an open and positive manner.

The school will maintain regular communication with the primary carer and will ensure that copies of reports are forwarded to the Social Worker in addition to the foster carer and parent.

### **Involving other agencies**

Esher High School recognises that multi-agency working is crucial to the support and progress of children in public care. The school will work closely with other agencies involved in supporting the achievements and welfare of the child, particularly the social worker. The school will exchange significant information to appropriate personnel between reviews when necessary.

### **Assessment, planning, monitoring and review procedures**

Class teachers will carry out assessment, planning and monitoring in accordance with general school practice. Established benchmarks for attainment will be used and challenging targets set. Data will be used to show how Children Looked After are progressing with staff identifying any

barriers to their learning. Additional support will be offered to meet needs of Children Looked After who are at risk of underachieving. Each pupil in public care will have a PEP as part of their Care Plan. This will identify basic information, act as a record of progress, identify specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. The PEP will be reviewed regularly and will feed into the Care Plan.

The Designated Teacher will maintain an overview of the progress and needs of each child in public care.

The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.