



Ripon Grammar School

Looked After Children Policy

1. Introduction

Ripon Grammar School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Many looked-after [LAC] and previously looked-after children [PLAC] have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning.

For the purposes of this policy:

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

The Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children 2015 (updated 2018), place a duty on us to work together to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. We recognise that schools and teachers are at the very heart of this process so that we can provide a good education in order to unlock a bright future and so increase life chances of this vulnerable group. We are highly ambitious for these young people, knowing that securing the best possible progress for them will greatly enhance their life chances.

2 Policy

We will support the Government's agenda for giving all looked after children the same life chances as any other child, in that we want them to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and achieve economic well-being. Specifically:

- make a real difference in helping to provide the best possible education for looked after children as much as any other
- seek to give our young people in care professional help, encouragement and support, so they find our school a welcoming and friendly place
- be fully inclusive and we will challenge negative views and stereotypes
- offer support to and work with their foster carers on how to assist the young person's learning and enhance educational opportunities.

3 Procedure

The governing body will introduce a monitoring procedure where they will look closely at the progress that looked after children are making in the school and identify if there are barriers to their next steps of learning and progress.

The annual reporting cycle informs on the following key aspects of provision and will be presented to the full governing body by the appointed Designated Teacher [Deputy Head [Pastoral & DSL] during the autumn term of each academic year as a standing agenda item. The report will include:

- The number of looked after children on roll
- Attendance statistics for any authorised and unauthorised absence
- Frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion
- Performance in core subjects, their progress and any value-added measure when compared against initial baseline assessment
- Participation and frequency of taking part in extra-curricular activities
- The provision arrangements for additional support identified to include 1:1 tuition at school and any externally added booster work provided in the care home
- The quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Governors

Governors recognise they have a key role and major influence to ensure that the needs of looked after children are considered at the improvement planning and policy level through to monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes:

- Introduce a monitoring procedure where they will look closely at the progress that looked after children are making in our school and identify if there are barriers to their next steps of learning and progress.
- Raise expectations for the achievement of looked after children and encourage them to do well by combining high expectation and standards with inclusion.
- Consider and set appropriately challenging targets and in so doing facilitate the appropriate resources in order to support the child to reach those targets.

4.2 Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.

In this context the Designated Teacher [Deputy Head [Pastoral] & DSL], acts under statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities [Feb 2018]. They have details of the legal status of each individual looked after child's care arrangements and what the contact arrangements are with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will also know the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.

- The designated teacher will work with the Virtual School Head and the child's social worker to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan and to ensure their safety and security.
- As the majority of children looked after have special educational needs and/ or disabilities, our SENCO will be closely involved with the provision for this group.
- Be the central point of contact at this school for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the individual looked after children we have on roll
- Take the lead role in the professional assessment and preparation of the educational targets and subsequent reviews to be recorded into the relevant sections of the child's Personal Education Plan. The PEP should be established within twenty school working days for any looked after child starting on roll. This to include the

gradual addition and updating of further information over time e.g. attendance, attainment and progress results

- Attend relevant update training and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding looked after children
- Ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account
- Establish good working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews
- Provide support and sanctuary to help settle a looked after child into the school, and at other times; ensure the looked after child feels safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support;
- Ensure the transfer of records if a looked after child moves school
- Provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required
- Seek and prioritise meetings with, and referrals to, appropriate external agencies in situations that require external support.

4.3 Teaching and Support Staff

Are also required to assist in the implementation and support of this policy for looked after children by:

- Ensure the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained
- Be familiar with, and respond appropriately to, requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews
- Respond positively to any request by a child to be the person they want to talk with
- Ensure that no child in care becomes the victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and eradicated
- Positively promote the self-esteem of looked after children
- Convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement

5. Safeguarding

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on looked after children and previously looked after children by familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' document (September 2021), if there are any safeguarding concerns and reporting these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Policy Updated: Jan 2022

Appendix 1

The name of our appointed Designated Governor is: Helen Stiles, SEN Governors.

The name of our school's Designated Teacher is: Marita Murray, Deputy Headteacher, Pastoral & DSL

The name of our operational manager of Looked After Children is: Samina O'Brien, SENCO.