



# HINGUAR PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



## LOOKED AFTER CHILD POLICY

This policy was approved by the Governors in Summer 2023

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis

"Hinguar Primary School and Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment."

*"Hinguar Primary School and Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment".*

This policy should be read and implemented in line with school policies on the following:

- Child Protection
- Confidentiality
- Southend Virtual School Policies

## **Legal Framework**

Under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Children and Families Act 2014, schools and governors are to have effective policies and practices for supporting and promoting the education of looked after children.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children.
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children.
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and trancies for all looked after children.
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of looked after children.
- Develop systems of communications and protocols.
- Promote the attendance of looked after children.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies used for the development of provision for Looked After Children undertaken within Hinguar Primary School and Nursery. The policy aims to take into account diversity and provide equality of opportunity.

## **Introduction**

The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC.

## **The objectives of Hinguar Primary School and Nursery is to:**

- Ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment.
- Ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.
- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children.
- Ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability.
- Ensure that LAC pupils have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which is regularly reviewed and has contributions from the child, parents, and foster carers.
- Ensure that LAC Pupil Premium funding is used effectively to support LAC pupils academic and personal and social development.
- Ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.

## **Who are 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 provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

Children who are “looked after” may be “Accommodated”, “In Care” or “remanded/ detained” as follows.

They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (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.
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38). 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.

- 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).

A child can be remanded or detained in the following ways: -

- An emergency protection order.
- Removed by police using their powers of protection.
- Remanded by a court following criminal charges.
- A court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

The term '**in care**' refers to children who are subject to a care order by the courts - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be '**Looked After Children**' -LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

### **Supporting our LAC at Hinguar Primary School and Nursery**

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 negative communicating behaviours.
- Poor attachments to others.
- Have a need to be very private.

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life - chances. The governing body of Hinguar Primary School and Nursery, is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following policy and practices are implemented and are working effectively.

### **Admissions**

The Governing Body endorses council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. LAC are identified as having priority admission by the Admission Authority, this can be directed to exceed infant class size. LAC may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary, we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC pupils.

### **Allocation of resources**

The trustees and governors, will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

### **Monitoring the progress of LAC**

The social worker for the LAC will initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP (The PEP is the major education plan for a LAC) - within 14 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing officer or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP. The Designated Teacher for LAC is also responsible for providing termly reports to the Governing Body outlining the progress of any LAC.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher will know the names of all the LAC in school, including those placed by other authorities, and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. It is important that the school flags LAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

### **Staff Development**

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC. Designated Teachers will also attend Network Meetings to ensure they have all the up-to-date information regarding LAC in the local authority.

### **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

### **Links with external agencies/organisations**

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- LAC education teams
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- EMWHS
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential childcare worker
- Youth Offending Service.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Rationale for roles and responsibilities:**

Looked After Children – LAC - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- Poor test success rates in comparison with the general population.
- Underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

### **The Designated Teacher will:**

- Be an advocate for LAC within school.
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the school community.

- Know who are all the LAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- Attend relevant training about LAC.
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate.
- Ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 14 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan. The PEP should be linked to the care plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least every 6 months.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings. PEPs will also be reviewed at transfer and at six monthly intervals or more if necessary.
- Complete termly reports on LAC via the virtual School System and update any information regarding PEP's and interventions.
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need-to-know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil.
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC.
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events. Provide accurate written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensuring attendance as far as possible.
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for LAC.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement.
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required.
- Report to the Governing body on LAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development.
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc. Ensuring that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Prepare reports, when requested for Governors' meetings to include:
  1. The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
  2. Their attendance compared to other pupils.
  3. Their attainment (SATs/Teacher Assessments) compared to other pupils.
  4. The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
  5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
  6. The extended school provision accessed by the pupil.
- Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC.
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA.
- Arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to school. The identified member of staff that the pupil can talk to should be based on the child's request and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the Inclusion Manager and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

**Good practice suggests that all school staff will:**

- Follow school procedures.

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC.
- Positively promote the raising of a LAC's self esteem.
- Respond positively to a LAC's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it necessary.
- As with all children, ensure that no LAC is stigmatised in any way.
- Ensure any LAC is supported sensitively, and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings needed as part of review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC is experiencing difficulties.
- Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement.
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times.
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate.
- Make extra copies of reports available when required

**Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:**

- Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher and is regularly made aware of any significant issues regarding LAC.
- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise LAC according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice.
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names).
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC.
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC.
- Liaise with the headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met.
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
  1. Admission to school
  2. National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
  3. Out of school learning and extra curricular activities
  4. Work experience and careers guidance.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC.

**The named LAC Governor should be satisfied that:**

- the school has a coherent policy for looked after children
- the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DfES guidelines
- the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- the Governing body receives an annual report

**The Local Authority will:**

- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC.
- Ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other pupil.
- Ensure that LAC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible.
- Ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Southend from another authority.
- Make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance.

- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training.
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate.
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible.
- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer.
- Identify a designated officer who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC.
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC.

### **Pupil Premium Funding for Looked After Children:**

#### **Looked After Children (LAC)**

#### **Basis of the allocations to the local authority**

The Department will allocate a **maximum** of £2,345 per child for the number of children looked after for at least one day as recorded in the Children Looked After Data Return. See Virtual School website for more information: <https://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Services/285>. From April 2015 schools are not required to submit a separate application form for Pupil Premium Grant. The PEP action plan will double up as the application for Pupil Premium Grant funding. However this will be reviewed in the light of practice.

The Pupil Premium Grant will **only** be provided to meet the needs identified in a high-quality action plan in the PEP with clear SMART targets for academic improvement, underpinned by well-targeted support.

The Pupil Premium Grant must be used to improve outcomes for children in the following areas in order of priority:

- Academic achievement and progress
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented
- Attendance
- Inclusion (by reducing internal and external exclusion)
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider
- Social Skills
- Mental health which includes overcoming the effects of attachment and developmental trauma, where this affects learning
- Out of hours activities that support any of the above

### **Use of the Looked After Children Premium**

The grant allocation for Looked After Children must be managed by the designated Virtual School Head in the authority that looks after those children to be used for the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP). The Virtual School Head should ensure there are arrangements in place to discuss with the child's education setting – usually with the designated teacher – how the child will benefit from any pupil premium funding. The local authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally in any financial year. Grant held centrally that has not been spent by 31 March will be recovered by the local authority to the secretary of state (Please refer to Southend Virtual School website: <https://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Services/285>

### **Children adopted from care**

The Pupil Premium grant will include those pupils recorded on the January School Census who were looked after immediately before being adopted on or after 30 December 2005<sup>3</sup>, or were placed on a Special Guardianship or Residence Order immediately after being looked after (known as **post-LAC**). A child should be recorded as such where the parent or guardian of the child has informed the school that the child has been adopted from care or has left care under a Special Guardianship or Residence Order.

### **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.

### **LAC policy review and evaluation**

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year.



