



**Didcot**  
PRIMARY ACADEMY

## Looked After Children Policy Whole School and EYFS

This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on the school's website and by request from the School Office. If you require a copy of this document in large print or audio format, please contact the School Office.

## POLICY REVIEW INFORMATION

<b>Policy/Document</b>	DPA Looked After Children Policy
<b>Review schedule</b>	Every 3 years
<b>Statutory Policy</b>	No
<b>Policy owner</b>	Exec Principal
<b>Lead Reviewer</b>	Exec Principal
<b>Approver and date of last approval</b>	Exec Principal, October 2023
<b>Key review dates</b>	<b>Changes made</b>
April 2016	Document written
September 2020	Updated in light of amendments to KCSIE 2020
October 2023	No changes needed
Next review due: September 2026	

### Policy statement

This policy will promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children (LAC) in our school. We will ensure that these children participate in high quality learning and progress and that they do not face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. We will work closely with the Local Authority and those who have day to day responsibility for the young person.

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the 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. It is linked to our Equality, Safeguarding and SEND policies.

### Background

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care and drew attention to:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population;
- a high level of disruption and change in school placements;
- lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities;
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework;
- underachievement in further and higher education.

### What does Looked After Children mean?

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be '**looked after children**' (LAC) or children in care or '**children looked after**' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- foster carers;
- in a children's home;
- in a residential school;
- with relatives;
- even with parents – under supervision of Children's Services.

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- in foster care;
- in a children's home;
- in a residential school

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

### **The Role of the (Exec) Principal**

#### **Within the school:**

- to ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated;
- to advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the Personal Education Planning meeting;
- to ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding where relevant is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced;
- to ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'in care' and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- to inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc.;
- to act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
- to develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services and birth parents where appropriate;
- to hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date, used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- to track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- to intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium funding to accelerate progress;
- to intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy;
- to ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them;

- to report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis ( preferably each term) on the outcomes for children looked after.

**With individual Looked After Children:**

- to discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- to enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- to ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- to supervise the smooth induction of a new child looked after into the school;
- to develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers;
- to fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from partner agencies.

**Liaison with other agencies:**

- to develop good communication with Children's Services staff so that the schools plan supports the child's Care Plan;
- to attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- to ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and to provide termly attainment and attendance data.

**Training:**

- to cascade training to school staff as appropriate;
- to attend the annual Designated Teachers conference and participate in area cluster groups for additional training and to share good practice;
- to develop knowledge of procedures by attending training events organised by the Children's Services;
- to keep informed of any updated guidance from DfE or other research or policy.

**The role of the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)**

To request an annual report from the school which will contain the following information:

- the number of looked after pupils in the school;
- a comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- the attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- the level of fixed term/permanent exclusions;
- pupil destinations after leaving the school.

The MAT Chair should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:

- the curriculum;
- additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. one to one tuition;
- additional education support;
- extra-curricular activities;
- the most effective use of the Pupil Premium to raise attainment.

### **Admission Arrangements**

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous setting (school, nursery, children's centre) and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate. This meeting will always involve someone with parental responsibility. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. This plan will support the overall LA Care Plan for the child. An appropriate school induction will take place.

### **Data Handling/Sharing**

When children leave or join Didcot Primary Academy (including in-year transfers), all files (including child protection files) will be transferred in accordance with best practice guidance stipulated in KCSIE 2020.

### **Safeguarding**

The Local Authority will share information with the school when children being admitted to the pupil roll have a social worker and this information will also be requested by the school on the pupil information form. This information will be used to ensure that decisions will be made in the best interest of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Principal will continuously monitor attainment and attendance data of Looked After Children and report these to the LA termly. The (Exec) Principal will report to the MAT board annually with termly updates. Individual plans will be reviewed by the (Exec) Principal, LA and those with day to day responsibility on a half termly basis. Approval of the policy will be made by the MAT Board's Director of Education and Director of Welfare and Safeguarding.