

GOWERTON SCHOOL



ARTICLE 19: *Make sure that staff and pupils are safe in school and at home*

ARTICLE 14: *Show respect for other people's views, opinions, Religions and beliefs*

POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

Gowerton School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

Designated Teacher for LAC: Sian Pascoe

Governor with responsibility for LAC: Debbie Lloyd

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. We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- **Stay Safe** – through protection and giving support
- **Be healthy** – through spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well-being
- **Enjoy and achieve** – through taking an active and positive role
- **Make a positive contribution** – through feeling valued
- **Achieve economic well being** – through learning life skills

The aims of the school are to:

- 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 take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- 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

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. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- children who are the subjects of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order;
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection;
- 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.

The term '**in care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – 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 Swansea local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

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. Due to care placement changes, 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 Governing Body 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 should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP – within twenty 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 office or social workers, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the LAC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other authorities. 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

Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC and attend courses when appropriate.

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 teams
- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social Care Worker/Community Care Worker/Residential Child Care Worker

- Youth Offending Service
- School Age Parents' Officer

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. The outcomes of this review inform the School Development Plan.

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.

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 twenty days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- 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 after school events
- 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.
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings, to include:
 - The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
 - Their attendance compared to other pupils'.
 - Their attainment compared to other pupils'.
 - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC
- arrange a mentor or befriender (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
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.

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.
- 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.
- 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:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DCFS Admissions Code of Practice.
- 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 Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met.
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher.
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.

- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of school learning and extra-curricular activities 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.

POLICY NAME: *Looked After Children*

REVIEWED BY: *Behaviour & Welfare Working Party*

DATE REVIEWED: *14/03/17*

DATE TO FGB: *05/04/17*

SIGNED: *Debbie Lloyd*

PRINT NAME: *Debbie Lloyd (Chair of Governors)*

DATE NEXT DUE TO BE REVIEWED *March 2018*