



# **Looked After Children Policy**

**Designated Teacher: Mrs Michelle Archer**

**Designated Governor: Mr Chris Darlington**

**Written: Spring 2022**

**Review: Spring 2024**

## Introduction

Brigg Primary School believes that our school plays a key role in helping to raise the educational standards and in improving the life chances of looked-after children. We believe that schools can also provide a source of continuity and "normality" for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and feel they can be themselves. Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked-after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

## Definition

A child who is looked-after by the local authority (referred to as a looked-after child) as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989, means a child who is subject to a care order (or an interim care order) or who is accommodated by the Local Authority. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

The Governing Body of Brigg Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. We recognise that looked after children can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a broad and balanced education for all looked-after children.
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked-after children.
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions for all looked-after children.
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher to advocate for the rights of looked-after children.
- Ensure the designated teacher is a member of the leadership team and there is written cover provision for when they are absent or unavailable.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has appropriate training for the role and recognises that looked-after children and those placed for adoption are not a homogenous group and that their individual needs will be different.
- Promote the attendance of looked-after children.
- Promote a culture that takes account of the child's views according to age and understanding in identifying and meeting their education needs.

- Promote a culture throughout the school and amongst professional partners of understanding the importance of listening to and taking account of the child's wishes and feelings about education and the Personal Educational Plan (PEP) process.
- Ensure the appropriate and educationally impactful use of the LAC Pupil Premium, providing quantifiable results.
- Prioritise the mental health and emotional well-being of LAC pupils.

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are looked-after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, extracurricular activities and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked-after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the Designated Teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of new legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavour to support all looked-after children educated in school to achieve their fullest possible academic potential.
- Embed an emphasis on emotional wellbeing throughout the school and curriculum, which looked-after children will particularly benefit from.
- Give looked-after children a voice and influence in their school lives and ensure that their views are heard and acted on.

### Roles and responsibilities

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Headteacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked-after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Headteacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked-after children.

The named Governor will ensure 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 DfE guidelines
- The Designated Teacher has received appropriate training
- Looked-after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- The local governing body receives regular reports
- The school works closely with the Virtual School Head

The Headteacher will:

- Appoint the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training
- Ensure the Designated Teacher is a member of the leadership team and there is appropriate cover provision
- Oversee the implementation of the policy on looked-after children
- Be responsible for all systems to support looked-after children
- Report to the Governing Body on a regular basis on the following:
  1. The number of looked after pupils in the school
  2. An analysis of data as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
  3. The attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
  4. The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
  5. The number of complaints

### The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will serve as the contact for Children's Services and the Local Authority and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked-after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after-children in the school. The Designated Teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked-after children of the school by:

- Maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked-after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- Ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked-after children and understand the

need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements

- Acting as an advocate for looked-after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances
- Work to close the attainment and progress gap between looked-after children and their peers and create a culture of high aspirations for them

The Designated Teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after-children. They will:

- Have an overview and co-coordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked-after
- Maintain records regarding all looked-after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- Establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- Monitor the educational progress of all looked-after children and intervene, in cooperation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or other similar concern

The Designated Teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- Building positive home-school relationships between parents/designated carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- Being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's PEP
- Playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance at and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked-after children
- Helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings
- Serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- Ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- Inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The Designated Teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- By ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues
- By ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- By requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies
- By meeting with the SENCO to ensure all looked -after children with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- By having a strategy for new school transitions
- By ensuring all looked after-children are made to feel a part of the school environment
- By listening to the child and giving them every opportunity to express their views and acting according to their age and understanding in identifying and meeting their educational needs.

### All Staff

All staff at Brigg Primary School will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked-after children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain looked-after children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable looked-after children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all looked-after children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of looked-after children.

### Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) or ePEP, which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and the Designated Teacher will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review the plan. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses
- Interests, both in and out of school
- Developmental, educational and pastoral needs
- Future plans, and how these can be supported
- Issues arising for the child
- Targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting
- The child's emotional wellbeing and intervention and therapeutic care to develop resilience and emotional wellbeing.

### Admission Arrangements

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the Designated Teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school.

Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school communications such as reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities.

### Complaints

These will be dealt with under the school complaints procedure.

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## Appendix 1

### The ways in which Children and Young People become Looked After

The term 'looked after' was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for a child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child's welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives or even with parents on a part or full time basis.

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.

Section 20 - Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents.

Section 21 - Children who are compulsory accommodated. This includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

Section 38 - Children who are under the subject of a care order or an interim care order.

Section 31 - Children who are subject to a care order made by the courts. For the courts to grant a care order they have to be satisfied that a child is suffering or would suffer 'significant harm' without one.

Section 44 - Emergency Protection Order.

Section 46 - Police Protection Order.

*Within a Section 44 and a Section 46 the Local Authority specifies contact arrangements during the period of the order.*