



Brookfields
Specialist SEN School

Brookfields School Policy on the Education of Children Looked After

Date	Description
17 April 2024	Approved by the Full Governing Board

Review schedule	Annually
Next review	March 2025
Policy holder	James Gearing

Brookfields School Equalities Statement

All pupils at the school are offered a broad, balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum regardless of their background, culture or ability. Each pupil is valued for who they are and what they bring to the school. We appreciate and celebrate the richness of diversity within the school community as well as the wider community. Through the work we do across the school on developing Values, we actively promote the importance of tolerance, co-operation, courage, determination, friendship and respect. Through this approach, pupils develop independence, confidence and integrity which prepares them for their future lives.

Who are our Children Looked After?

(It should be noted that the DfE guidance still uses the terminology 'Looked-after Children,' Both West Berkshire and Reading use the term 'Child Looked After' to refer to a child in care (January 2023)

Children and young people become 'Looked After' either if they have been taken into Care by the local authority, either via a legal route under The Children's Act 1989 or where a voluntary agreement has been reached with the birth family. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth family. Some Children Looked After may also be in a local residential setting for a portion of the week to offer the family respite. They become a Child Looked After if this respite crosses a certain percentage of time in that care setting versus time spent at home. A child comes into the care of the local authority (regulation 48) if

- a) They spend more than 24 hours in an authority-provided care setting
- b) The arranged short break lasts more than 17 consecutive days, or the total of 'short breaks' the young person accesses in one single placement is more than 75 days per year

Brookfields School also educates children in care from different Local Authority areas and our special duty extends to these young people also. These Local Authorities may have different expectations on Children Looked After and operate using different systems, so it is important for the school, and specifically the designated teacher for Children Looked After to respond to these appropriately and hold the views of our Children Looked After in account.

What about those who were previously in care?

Some children have left local authority care because they are the subject of an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order.

Brookfields School believes that in partnership with West Berkshire District Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of these children

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Aim

To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

To support our children in care and previously in care and give them access to every opportunity to achieve their potential and enjoy learning.

To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our children in care and previously in care, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

In Pursuit Of This Policy We Will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that their needs in school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend the termly Designated Teacher Network meetings and any specific training on children in care which is required to ensure that they have the most up to date information.
- Review all policies and procedures regularly to ensure that they adequately address the needs of children in care and that those children have access to all aspects of education, particularly with regard to admissions, curriculum, examinations, extra support, extra curricular activities, work experience and careers guidance (where applicable).
- Have a clear and consistent plan for attendance at all Personal Education Plan meetings (Designated Teacher/ Class Tutor etc) to ensure coherence and efficiency in planning and attaining targets. The members of staff attending need to be free or made free from teaching commitments to attend PEP meetings. PEP meetings will be called every term, or 3 times in each academic year and more regularly if required
- Unless otherwise agreed the child or young person should attend all or part of the meeting and should be released from lessons to do so.
- During the PEP meeting, targets and actions agreed will be available and recorded on the electronic PEP platform. Copies of the PEP record will be sent to the carer(s) after the meeting.
- Any vital information that has an impact on learning will be shared with teaching and support staff raised at PEP meetings will be circulated to other teaching and support staff on a 'need to know' basis as agreed at the meeting and, in best practice, agreed with the child or young person concerned
- Be committed to liaising with and responding to the specific systems for Local Authority virtual schools use to monitor Children Looked After in their remit. This could include marking and analysing attendance, uploading evidence and responding to communication from the Virtual School team for that local authority.
- Discuss issues relating to attendance and/or exclusions with the Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that there is as little disruption to a child's education as possible.

When considering a permanent exclusion, a discussion will be held with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for any children in care and previously in care in school.
- Maintain an up to date record of all children in care and previously in care who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or Section 20 accommodation.
 - Type of placement i.e. Foster, Respite, Residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent and carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEN Code of Practice – School Action/School Action Plus where appropriate.
 - Child Protection information when appropriate.
 - Baseline information, including an assessment of preferred learning styles and all test results.
 - Attendance figures.
 - Exclusions.
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan for each child/young person to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Education Health and Care Plan and, where applicable, include any other school plan e.g. , Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme, Therapeutic Thinking / Behaviour Support Plan, Risk Assessment, Medical Care Plan, appropriate safeguarding information
- Ensure that someone attends Childrens' Services Care Planning Reviews on each child/young person and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with the Virtual School on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of children in care.
- Provide the Virtual School with regular updates on attainment and progress by recording this in the child or young person's PEP, enabling the Virtual School Headteacher to have clear tracking data for all children in care.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when children in care or previously in care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy including access to 1:1 tuition.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about children in care where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that children in care or previously in care, along with all children, are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.

- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of children in care or previously in care.
- Report to the Governing board annually on the academic performance, attendance and exclusions of the children in care or previously in care who are on the roll of the school.
- Ensure that the school evaluates the performance data for all children in care and that it is recorded in the school's self evaluation documentation.
- Ensure that families, care providers and supporters of Children Looked After are supported by the school, and specifically by the pastoral team. This may take the form of regular visits, support in attending meetings or appointments, or providing advice in the home setting.

All staff will:

- As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of children in care or previously in care;
- Ensure entry to examinations for children in care where appropriate;
- Be familiar with the Guidance on children in care or previously in care and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a child in care or previously in care is experiencing difficulty. These may be academic, pastoral, behaviour and/or attendance issues.

All governors will:

- Ensure that admission criteria (Aided and Foundation) prioritise children in care or previously in care according to the Code of Practice on Admissions;
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for children in care or previously in care
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for children in care or previously in care
- Nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing board;
- For child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect of the confidentiality of the pupils concerned;
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years;
- Ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give children in care or previously in care equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school
 - The National Curriculum and public examinations where appropriate, or alternative curriculums and learning approaches commensurate to individual learner's needs
 - Additional educational support where this is needed. Extra curricular activities
 - Work experience and careers guidance.
- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of children in care or previously in care
- Ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place in the school even if there are no children in care or previously in care on roll at the time and that the Designated Teacher continues to attend training and is up to date in regards to the legal processes.

Additional Information:

Structure of educational support for Children in Care

Virtual School Headteacher

The service is led by the Virtual School Headteacher, who maintains an overview of the Virtual School and the local authority's strategic direction. Key responsibilities are:

- To support Children and Young People in the care of West Berkshire District Council in educational and preschool settings within the district or outside of the area and to offer support to those in the care of other authorities but placed in West Berkshire schools or settings
- To raise the educational attainment and achievement of children in care and other previously looked after children'
- To ensure that children in care have equal access to educational, training and employment opportunities
- To ensure that children in care participate and progress within a wide range of educational and broader activity within and extending beyond schools
- To ensure that the services are responsive to and informed by the voice and needs of children in care and those from other vulnerable groups

Virtual School Consultants

Virtual School Consultants for children in care support children and young people from preschool right through to the end of statutory education. Their aim is to support the academic outcomes of children in care by:

- Chairing and minuting Personal Education Planning Meetings
- Contributing to the training programme for foster carers and social workers
- Providing guidance and training on issues relating to children in care, e.g. separation, trauma and loss, the significance of early attachments, etc
- Advising social workers on the education of children in care
- Signposting services to other professionals
 - **Providing options for home-tutoring if appropriate**

The Pupil Premium funding for Children in Care

The Pupil Premium Plus grant is to support children in care (adopted children are also eligible for the Pupil Premium but this funding is not managed by the local authority). The PPP grant **MUST** be used to provide additional support for children in care to reach their full potential. It can be used to support academic, social and emotional needs, as long as these are linked to the pupil's progress. The use of the Pupil Premium for children in care will be discussed at the Personal Education Plan meetings where the support can be identified and evaluated for impact. The Virtual School team will provide advice and guidance on the use of the Pupil Premium. It is a requirement of the grant that the use of the funds is published on the school website with a commentary on the impact of the funding on a child's educational outcomes. The child **MUST NOT** be able to be identified, so schools should be careful about the information that is made available to meet this requirement.

Signed:
Policy Holder

Date:

Signed:
Headteacher/Governor

Date: