

Hipsburn Primary School

Looked After Children Policy

September 2024



Our school vision:

“The most valuable gift we can give a learner is to enable them to think for themselves, to care for others and thereby acquire a sense of self-worth and confidence which can be used to benefit both society and the individual.”

Statement of Intent:

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after and previously looked after children (LAC) are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation. Hipsburn Primary School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention, for all our pupils.

Vision:

Our shared vision is for every child to become successful, responsible, resilient and reflective lifelong learners. At Hipsburn Primary school, we are an inclusive community and have the highest of expectations for all pupils and staff; we believe learning should be fun, purposeful and challenging. Our curriculum focusses on the holistic development of each child and the importance of understanding, sharing and celebrating our differences in a safe and secure environment. We also strongly believe that children should have a stimulating, creative and thought provoking curriculum which provides opportunities for all children to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of themselves, the curriculum and their role in the local and global community.

Aims:

- To create a safe, stimulating and challenging curriculum that creates a love of learning both indoors and outdoors.
- To develop strong and collaborative partnerships with parents and the wider community.
- To develop an inclusive community where children, staff and the community learn together and celebrate each other's differences and achievements.
- To enable pupils to become respectful, happy and confident learners with a 'Can do' attitude to learning and life.

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'

Definitions:

Looked After Children (LAC) are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, as the Local Authority has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the Local Authority under an agreement with their parents.

Previously-Looked After Children (also known Post-LAC) are defined as:

- Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Roles and responsibilities:

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and Post-LAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and Post-LAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring LAC and Post-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the head teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.

The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.

- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC children.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-LAC as effectively as possible.

Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:

- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure social workers, schools and designated teachers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Ensure that up-to-date and effective Personal Education Plan that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing body on the following:
 - The number of LAC and Post-LAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of LAC and Post-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Promoting actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

The designated teacher for LAC and Post-LAC is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and Post-LAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and Post-LAC at the school.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the education department.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and Post-LAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of Posty-LAC.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and Post-LAC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and Post-LAC.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and Post-LAC.

Personal Education Plans (PEPS)

- The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.

- The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- The school will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the PEP to support the child's educational needs and raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.

Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:

- Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
- Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

Working with agencies and the VSH:

- The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of

LAC with their statutory care review:

- The school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues.
- Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- The designated teacher for LAC and Post-LAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
- The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how pupil premium plus can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- Pupil Premium Plus for Post-LAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school.
- The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of Pupil Premium Plus for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or Post-LAC, and according to their needs.
- If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.
- The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.
- The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and Post-LAC.

Training:

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and Post-LAC have received the appropriate training; this includes information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities

- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Pupil mental health

LAC and previously-LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously-LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

Exclusions:

Past experiences of LAC and Post-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour policy. The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC. Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort; where exclusion is considered, the school will work with the VSH, and others, to consider what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements that can be made to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion. The school will inform carers / parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

Pupils with SEND:

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an Education Health Care plan (EHCP), will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews. The Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo), class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for Post-LAC.

Information sharing:

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and Post-LAC are understood and met.

The arrangements set out:

- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured.

- How pupils and parents / carers are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

Monitoring and review:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and governing body.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025