

Mousehold Infant & Nursery School



Title of Policy:

Provision for Looked After Children

**Subject Leader/Contact Person: Ian Tolson
(Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.)**

This policy has been developed, reviewed & adopted as follows:

	Date of Draft	Date Agreed	Date of Review	Date of Review	Date of Review
Staff	March 2021				
Trustee	March 2021				

School Aims:	Respect, Help, Learn, Enjoy, Achieve.
School Self Review:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How high are standards?• Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development.• How well are pupils taught?• How good are curricular & learning opportunities?• How well does the school care for its pupils?• How well is the school led & managed?• How well does the school work in partnership with parents?• How effective is the school?

Signed  (Headteacher)

**Mousehold Infant & Nursery School – Policy - Provision for Looked After Children
March 2021**

Rationale

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. 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 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

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 the 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.

Furthermore, the term “looked after”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, which has been adopted by the DfES in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”.

Legal Framework

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of looked after children.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all looked after children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of looked after children
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of looked after children

Objectives

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, careers guidance, extra curricular activities, work experience, 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.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavor to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve well.

Roles and Responsibilities

Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel “different”. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

The named Trustee will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher 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 Trustee should be satisfied that :

- the school has a coherent policy for looked after children
- the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- the Trustees receive an annual report

The Head Teacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher
- ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- oversee the development of the policy on looked after children
- be responsible for all systems to support looked after children.
- report to the trustees on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints

The Designated Teacher

The designated teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department 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

The designated teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children. S/he will:

- have an overview and co-ordinating 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 co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern

The designated teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-school relationships between parents / 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 of the most appropriate member of staff 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 meeting with the looked after child to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role
- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues (this maybe the class teacher in a primary school)
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- by requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a looked after child requires additional academic or behavioural support
- by working closely 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 key stage or new school transitions
- by ensuring all looked after children are made to feel a part of the school environment

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LEA's 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 reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

Monitoring the attendance of Norfolk Looked After Children

It is a statutory responsibility for local authorities to collect attendance data for the children and young people in their care.

Norfolk Virtual School commission a specialist organisation, Welfare Call, to collect attendance data for Norfolk's looked after children from reception to Year 11 every school day on our behalf.

Welfare Call staff make a daily phone call to every school and specialist provider, including out of county provision, where Norfolk children are on roll. These calls are to confirm that the pupil is in attendance. If they are not Welfare Call will contact the Carer (where relevant) and, if necessary, the Social Worker. In addition, where a pupil has been excluded from school Welfare Call will send an immediate alert to the Social Worker enabling them to follow up.

A number of reports, including a daily report, are available to the Virtual School. This real time data assists us with tracking patterns of attendance and exclusions and in turn enables us to tackle underachievement where it is linked to poor attendance.

School Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that looked after children sometimes experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extra curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved then the school complaints policy must be followed.

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding all children at Mousehold Infant and Nursery School. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at Mousehold and all members of staff adhere to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. We feel it is important to remember why children behave the way they do and this does affect their learning. We expect all staff to read and follow the guidelines set out in the '[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#)' document. This can be found in the Staff Handbook in the staffroom. It can also be found online.