



For every child to reach their potential and live life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

Name of Policy: Looked After Children Policy

Policy Written: September 2019

Policy Reviewed:

September 2020	Changes made to Intent Section with bullet points added and addition of staff names.

Next Review: September 2021

Intent:

Hindsford CofE Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. It recognises that nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is therefore committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the Guidance on The Education of Looked After Children, found on the link below.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

Under the 1989 Children’s Act (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>), a Looked After Child is defined as a child that is considered ‘Looked After’ by a local authority or LAC if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Local Authority (LA). These children may be looked after by Wigan Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority, but living within the area.

Children who are Looked After fall within one of the following groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20) This means that the child will be cared for on a voluntary basis and ‘accommodated’ by the Local Authority under Section 20 of The Children’s Act. As a result, they may live in foster care, in a children’s home or in a residential school.
- Children who are the subject of a Care Order, (Section 31) or Interim Care Order (Section 38). This order is issued if the court believes a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the Local Authority, or shared ownership with their parents. It is only the court order under Section 32 of The Children’s Act 1989 that can place a child under a Care Order. As a result, the child may be living with foster carers, in a children’s home, in a residential school or with relatives.
- Children who are the subject to an Emergency Protection Order (Sections 44 and 46). This means that h child will have been removed by police using their powers of protection.
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – This includes children remanded to the care of the LA or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (Section 21).

As the current legislation as set out in The Children’s Act places a duty on the school to fully safeguard these children, promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to achieve / reach their full potential.

It is the aim of this policy therefore, to outline how Hindsford will implement this.

Implementation:

Signs:

Looked After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues as direct impact of what they have experienced and how they are feeling:

- Low self-esteem.
- Poor education standards due to time out of school.
- Delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development.
- Be bullied or bully others.
- Be prone to mental health issues.
- Be isolated with few friends.
- Have behaviour issues.
- Poor attachments to others.
- Have a need to be very private.

If a child is experiencing any of the above, this could significantly impact their capability to access the education provided and thus reach their full potential and future aspirations.

Therefore, Hindsford CofE Primary School is committed to ensuring that these children receive the necessary intervention and support for these pupils to continue working effectively in school and feel safe:

- The school has a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (Mrs Holden) who, or the Pastoral Manager (Mr Wigman), will be the child's mentor and meet regularly with the child to see how they are feeling and achieving in their work.
- A Personal Education Plan will be written for all Looked After Children in the school which will identify what provision and intervention will be implemented.
- The Designated Teacher will communicate with all staff involved working with the pupil so that they have a clear understanding of the issues that the child is having so that they can support them in the best way possible. (The information shared will be confidential and a need to know basis.)
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

Role & Responsibility of Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher should:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children.
- When new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. (This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings.
- Ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher).
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis.
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible.

- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed as requested by the LA

Roles & Responsibilities of Staff

All staff should:

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- As with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way.
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting.
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children.

Roles & Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The Governing Body should:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children.
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (No Names).
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children.
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

Confidentiality

- Information on Looked after children will be shared with school staff on a 'Need to Know' basis
- The Designated Teacher will discuss what information will be shared and with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Training

The Headteacher or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.