



BANTOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children & Young People in Care Policy

Headteacher	H Sarai
Chair of Governors	N Round
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School Aims

At Bantock Primary we believe that **all** children have an equal opportunity to participate in a broad and balanced curriculum according to their needs, abilities and interests. We aim to remove all barriers to achievement and make every child **SHINE**.

SUCCEED

To have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievements of looked after children.

HAPPY

To positively promote the self-esteem of looked after children.

INSPIRE

To facilitate independent learning, and progress across the curriculum.

NURTURE

To ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained

EDUCATE

To prepare pupils for the next stage in their education.

This policy has been written with references to the following publications:

- *Promoting the education of Looked After Children - statutory guide for Local Authorities* (Department for Education, July 2014)
- *Statistical First Release - Children looked after in England year ending 31 March 2014*, (Department for Education, September 2014)
- *Pupil Premium 2014 to 2015: conditions of grant* (Department for Education February 2014)
- *Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head FAQ*, (Department for Education March 2014)

And with reference to the following legislation:

- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (“the Act”) and The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.
- The Local Authority statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- The Children and Families Act 2014, which requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer to make sure that its duty is properly discharged - referred to as the Virtual School Head.

Introduction

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care and drew attention to:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. All schools should have a policy for Children in Care that is subject to review and approval by the Governing Body.

The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of looked after children (referred to in Wolverhampton as a “Children or Young People in Care) but also the procedures that will ensure participation and learning for all.

Bantock Primary fully recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice.

What is a looked after child?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally defined as “looked after” by a local authority if he or she:

- Is provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours
- Is subject to a care order; or
- Is subject to a placement order

It is important not to confuse a young person’s legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children’s home
- In a residential home
- With relatives, or
- Even with parents - under supervision

Similarly, an “accommodated” child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children’s home, or
- In a residential school

This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home for a period of time in excess of 28 days. If such arrangements come to the attention of school staff we will notify the local authority to allow them to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

A looked after child ceases to be looked after when he or she turns 18 years old. On reaching his or her 18th birthday, the status of the child changes from being looked after to being a young adult eligible for help and assistance from the local authority.

Children or Young People in Care may (or may not) have some or all of the following issues:-

- 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 attachment to others
- Have a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life chances.

Bantock Primary School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place and working effectively:

- A “Designated Teacher” for Children & Young People in Care who will undertake training and receive advice from the Local Authority’s “Virtual Head Teacher” (VHT) for Children & Young People in Care
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all Children & Young People in Care
- A clear understanding by all staff of confidentiality and the issues that affect Children & Young People in Care
- Effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group

*The “Virtual Head Teacher” for Children & Young People in Care in Wolverhampton is:
Darren Martindale*

Role & Responsibility of the “Virtual Head Teacher”

- The VHT should be aware of the requirements on school governing bodies to appoint a “Designated Teacher” for Children & Young People in Care. They should have an understanding of the policies that schools in their area have in place to support the education of Children & Young People in Care
- The VHT should make schools aware of their responsibility to ensure that designated teachers have had the appropriate training to undertake their role as set out in the statutory guidance for governing bodies on the role of the “Designated Teacher” for Children & Young People in Care
- The VHT should offer training and advice to schools. This should enable schools to understand that Children & Young People in Care, including those who remain looked after but have been placed in adoption, are not a homogenous group and that their individual needs will be different.

*The “Designated Teacher” for Children & Young People in Care at Bantock Primary is:
Mr Thomas (Deputy Headteacher)*

Role & Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

- Be an advocate for Children & Young People in Care (including children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales)
- When new to school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings
- To ensure that the educational targets within the PEP are implemented fully and that all relevant staff are aware of them
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their PEP
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to track attainment and progress, and comply with statutory requirements
- To coordinate and monitor additional interventions and provisions in order to accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual Head teacher and partner agencies
- To ensure best value when spending the additional budget share made available (Pupil Premium) specifically for children looked after to support achievement
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary

- Ensure staff receive relevant, up to date 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
- Encourage Children & Young People in Care 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
- Consider every possible alternative to a temporary or permanent exclusion, in line with national, local and school admissions policies, due to the disproportionate effect that exclusion can have on the most vulnerable pupils. Instead, we will work together proactively with all key partners including the local authority, using every resource in our control (including alternative provision where appropriate), to solve problems.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews
- Attend relevant training on safeguarding and Children & Young People in Care /youth offending, keep up to date with relevant legislation & guidance and cascade to school staff as appropriate

Roles & Responsibilities of all Adults in School

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- 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 Children & Young People in Care
- Seek advice from the designated teacher regarding induction, own CPD and any interventions, classroom environment adaptations etc.

Roles & Responsibilities of the Governing Body

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Children & Young People in Care
- Be aware of whether the school has any Children & Young People in Care and how many (no names)
- Ensure that there is a Designated Teacher for Children & Young People in Care
- Liaise with the Head teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities in relation to Children & Young People in Care.
- Support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Children & Young People in Care are met
- The Full Governing Body, who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the full governing body.

Confidentiality

- Information on Children & Young People in Care will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis.
- In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head Teacher or the Designated Teacher.

- The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared 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.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with the carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate - but always involving someone with parental responsibility. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan (PEP). An induction will take place following the school's normal induction process.

Pupil Voice

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan by the Designated Teacher to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings.

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance;
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Behaviour;
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any);
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).

The PEP will be updated and reviewed at least annually or at the point of any major change and contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation of the educational targets within the Plan. The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all Children & Young People in Care against the key indicators outlined above.

Personal Education Plan (PEP) Completion:

Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after child entering the school)



Date is set for the completion of a PEP. A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data



PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker, designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate. A date is set for the next PEP meeting



PEP is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life. PEP sent by social worker to the LAC team

School Exclusions

Local authorities and schools must have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance, "*Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England*". In line with that, head teachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding any looked after child.

Where a school has concerns about a looked after child's behaviour, the "Virtual Head Teacher" should be informed and, where necessary, involved at the earliest opportunity.

Pupil Premium

Children & Young People in Care are one of the groups of pupils that attract pupil premium funding. Local Authorities receive a pupil premium grant allocation based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 15 at 31st August as recorded in the latest looked after children data return. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of Children & Young People in Care and close the attainment gap between this group and their peers.

VHT's, working with education settings, should implement pupil premium arrangements for Children & Young People in Care in accordance with the latest conditions of grant published by the department and any supplementary department advice it issues.

The DfE allocates to local authorities a provisional amount of £2300 per child looked after for at least one day, as recorded in the March 2017 children looked-after data return (SSDA903), and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2016.

DfE updates and finalises this allocation in December 2018, based on the number of children looked after for at least one day during the year ending March 2018, as recorded in the March 2018 children looked after data return (SSDA903), and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2017.

The grant allocation for Children & Young People in Care must be managed by the VHT in the authority that looks after those children to be used for the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP). The Virtual School Head should ensure there are arrangements in place to discuss with the child's education setting - usually with the designated teacher - how the child will benefit from any pupil premium funding. The local authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into the financial year 2019-2020.

There is no requirement for the VHT to give the money to schools. There is, however, a strong expectation that they will pass on all or part of pupil premium funding onto a child's education setting to be used to meet additional needs set out in his or her PEP. This can be passed on a termly or annual basis. Any funding not passed down to schools by the end of the financial year will have to be returned to the Department.

The DfE expects VHT's to manage the pupil premium to ensure that it promotes the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the authority. It may be appropriate to pool some pupil premium for activities to benefit the authority's looked after children more holistically. For example, it might be appropriate to use this funding to provide training for a group of designated teachers across the authority or a group of Teaching Alliance schools.

Equally, a virtual school head might negotiate with a school regarding pooling pupil premium funding for Children & Young People in Care with the school's pupil premium to provide an enhanced and more intensive package of support for disadvantaged children generally.

In Wolverhampton the VHT retains a proportion of pupil premium funding per child for the financial year. Schools can apply for this additional funding by completing a "Pupil Premium Additional Funding Request Form" for individual or pooled need (see appendix 1a and 1b).

Children adopted from care or who have left care

For 2018-19 the DfE also allocates £2300 per year for pupils recorded in the January 2018 school census and alternative provision census, who were looked after by an English or Welsh local authority immediately before being adopted, or who left local authority care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order). These are collectively referred to as post-LAC in these conditions of grant.