Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Policy Statement

Fairlawn and Haseltine Federation is committed to promoting the educational achievement, attendance, wellbeing and personal development of all children in its care. We recognise that children in care and previously looked after children may face additional barriers to learning and achievement and require targeted support to reach their full potential.

The school acknowledges its role as a corporate parent and is committed to working collaboratively with local authorities, carers, social workers, virtual school heads, parents and other agencies to secure the best possible outcomes for children in care.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Pupil Premium Strategy

Legal Framework

This policy is based upon the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009
- Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker and Children in Care (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017

Definitions

Children in Care (CiC) are children who are looked after by a local authority under a care order or who are accommodated by the local authority for a continuous period exceeding 24 hours.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are children who:

- Have left care through adoption;
- Became subject to a child arrangements order;
- Became subject to a special guardianship order; or
- Were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

Aims

The Federation aims to:

- Promote high educational aspirations and achievement for all children in care and previously looked after children.
- Ensure that children in care have access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.
- Promote attendance, engagement and participation in school life.
- Provide stability, consistency and continuity in learning.
- Ensure that all children in care have appropriate educational support and interventions.
- Support children's emotional health and wellbeing.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to children in care.
- Work effectively with families, carers, local authorities and partner agencies.
- Eliminate barriers to educational progress and attainment.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements relating to children in care and previously looked after children.
- Appoint a suitably qualified Designated Teacher.
- Ensure appropriate training and professional development are available.

- Monitor the educational outcomes of children in care through regular reports.
- Promote a culture of high expectations and inclusion.
- Ensure school policies and procedures support the educational achievement and wellbeing of children in care.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Promote a whole-school culture of support for children in care.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities.
- Enable the Designated Teacher to carry out their statutory duties effectively.
- Ensure that sufficient resources and support are available.

Designated Teacher

The school's Designated Teacher for Children in Care is:

Emily Bruggy

The Designated Teacher will:

- Promote the educational achievement of children in care and previously looked after children.
- Act as a central point of contact within school.
- Maintain an up-to-date record of all children in care and previously looked after children on roll.
- Ensure all children in care have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Attend and contribute to PEP meetings and statutory review meetings as appropriate.
- Work closely with the Virtual School Head and social workers.
- Monitor attendance, behaviour, progress and attainment.
- Ensure pupil premium plus funding is used effectively to address identified needs.
- Advocate for children in care and ensure their views are heard.
- Support staff in understanding attachment, trauma and adverse childhood experiences.
- Ensure effective transition arrangements are in place when pupils join, move within, or leave the school.
- Identify underachievement promptly and coordinate appropriate interventions.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained while sharing relevant information on a need-to-know basis.

- Ensure safeguarding concerns are acted upon in accordance with school procedures.

School Staff

All staff will:

- Have high aspirations for children in care and previously looked after children.
- Promote inclusion, achievement and wellbeing.
- Be aware of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma.
- Support attendance and engagement in learning.
- Contribute to Personal Education Plans when required.
- Maintain confidentiality and implement safeguarding procedures appropriately.
- Work positively with carers, social workers and external agencies.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Every child in care must have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that:

- PEPs are completed within statutory timescales.
- Appropriate educational targets are identified.
- Progress against targets is reviewed regularly.
- The views of the child are reflected within the plan.
- Educational provision and interventions are clearly documented.
- Pupil Premium Plus funding is linked to identified needs and measurable outcomes.

Attendance

The school recognises that good attendance is essential for educational success.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Monitor attendance closely.
- Identify concerns at an early stage.
- Liaise with carers, social workers and the local authority where attendance issues arise.
- Implement support strategies to improve attendance and engagement.

Behaviour and Exclusions

The Federation is committed to minimising exclusions for children in care.

Where concerns arise:

- Early intervention strategies will be implemented.
- Relevant professionals will be informed promptly.
- The Virtual School Head and social worker will be consulted.
- Additional support and reasonable adjustments will be considered.

The school will comply with statutory guidance regarding exclusions and children in care.

Safeguarding

Children in care are among the most vulnerable groups of children.

All safeguarding concerns will be managed in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Designated Teacher will work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure:

- Information sharing is timely and appropriate.
- Vulnerabilities are identified and addressed.
- Children receive appropriate support and protection.

Multi-Agency Working

The school will work collaboratively with:

- Local authorities
- Virtual School Heads
- Social workers
- Foster carers and residential staff
- Parents and guardians
- Health professionals
- Educational psychologists
- Other relevant agencies

to secure the best outcomes for children in care and previously looked after children.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Designated Teacher will provide a report to the Governing Body at least annually, and more frequently where appropriate.

The report will include anonymised information relating to:

- Educational attainment and progress
- Attendance
- Behaviour and exclusions
- Participation in wider school life
- PEP completion and review rates
- Effectiveness of interventions and support

The Governing Body will use this information to monitor the effectiveness of the school's provision and identify areas for improvement.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body or sooner if changes in legislation, statutory guidance or local authority procedures require it.

Designated Teacher for Children in Care: Emily Bruggy
Governor with Responsibility for Children in Care: Ros Tuerk
Policy Review Cycle: Annually
Next Review Date: September 2027