



The Stalyhill Schools' Federation

Looked After Children Policy

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At Stalyhill Schools' Federation we will continuously strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, transgender, ethnicity, culture and religious background, sexuality, disability, or special educational needs and ability. The school will actively promote equality and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

Did you know...

Children in Tameside who are in care or living with foster families and were previously known as 'Looked After Children' (LAC), were recently asked which term they would prefer to be used when verbalising their situation. They chose the term 'Cared for Children', and this is now the widely used term in Tameside.

Research by 'The Key' has found that organisations use both the terms looked after children (LAC), and children looked after (CLA). Both terms are acceptable when referring to these pupils.

Who are our Looked After Children?

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. Children and young people become "Looked After" either if they have been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most looked after children will be living with foster parents but a smaller number may be in children's residential units, living with a relative or even be placed at home with their birth parents. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a court makes a Care Order.

'A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.'

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The governing body of Stalyhill Infant School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

Stalyhill Infant School recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorses the Tameside Council policy and welcomes any child who may be looked after by the local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Tameside.

Stalyhill Infant School's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of looked after children is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all looked after children.

- Ensuring all looked after children have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require. This will also include details of how the PPG+ will be spent and impact of this spending.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity for the child.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of looked after children.
- Managing the provision and support for previously looked after children, including the spending of PPG+ funding via the PPG report.

Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, looked after children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, looked after children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 75% of looked after children leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping looked after children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school. We recognise that looked after children can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that looked after children may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. We also recognise that looked after children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. We believe that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aim to provide a learning environment in which every looked after child can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that any looked after child is able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Policy and Guidance

This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and the following associated guidance on the education of looked after children.

- The [Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#) aims to ensure children in care receive high-quality care and services, which are focused on and tailored to their needs.
- The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) amended the Children Act 1989 to require local authorities in England to appoint at least one person to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children.
- In England, the Department for Education (DfE) has provided [guidance and regulations on care planning, placement and case review \(PDF\)](#) (DfE, 2015).
- The DfE has also published a protocol for local authority children's services, local care providers, police forces, criminal justice agencies and local health services (including

mental health services) on [reducing criminalisation of looked after children and care leavers](#) (DfE, 2018a).

- In England, schools must have a designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children. The DfE has published statutory [guidance for local authority maintained schools](#) on their roles and responsibilities (DfE, 2018b).
- The DfE has also published guidance on [promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(PDF\)](#) (DfE, 2018c).
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) [quality standard on the health and wellbeing of looked after children and young people](#) sets out best practice in meeting the health and wellbeing needs of looked after children and young people in England (NICE, 2013).

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is committed to ensuring roles and responsibilities are carried out effectively in order to fulfil the school's duty regarding these pupils. Please see the table at the end of this policy which outlines specific roles and responsibilities.

Confidentiality

Information regarding looked after children will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know' basis the Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP/LAC meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep records of looked after children in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the looked after child starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the looked after child. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly. Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition. It is vital that the looked after child is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Exclusions

Stalyhill Infant School recognises that looked after children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a looked after child is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening. Exclusion provision will always be followed in line with the agreed exclusion policy from Tameside LA.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of looked after children. Other staff will

receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with looked after children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs.

Support and resources

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for looked after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

School receives PPG+ funding for each looked after child. The designated teacher is responsible for outlining how this money will be spent and measuring the impact of this spending through the child's PEP.

Home-school liaison

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable looked after children to achieve their potential. Open evenings, as well as PEP and LAC review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership. We recognise that due to care arrangements, children who are looked after may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the child. These services may include Social Care, Virtual School, Educational Psychologist Service, Health Services, HYM, Youth Offending Teams.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Stalyhill Infant School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

SCHOOL POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body	Designated Teacher	Whole School Staff
✓ Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice ✓ Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children. ✓ Ensure there is a designated teacher for Looked After Children ✓ Liaise with the Headteacher/ Designated Teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met ✓ Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the designated teacher ✓ Receive regular reports from the designated teacher which should include ○ the number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan ○ their attendance, compared to other pupils ○ their attainment compared to other pupils ○ the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) ○ the destinations of pupils who leave the school ✓ Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of ○ Admission to school ○ National Curriculum and non statutory areas of the curriculum ○ Out of school learning and extra curricular activities ✓ Annually, review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children	✓ Be an advocate for Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children ✓ Attend relevant training for Looked After Children ✓ Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and individuals in relation to Looked After Children seeking advice from Tameside Education Resource Team when appropriate. ✓ Ensure that all Looked After Children receive a positive reintegration on entering the school ✓ Ensure that all Looked After Children have an appropriate Personal Education Plan. ✓ Keep Personal Education Plans and other records up to date and reviewed appropriately ✓ Convene an urgent multi professional meeting if a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties or at risk of exclusion. ✓ Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential/personal information on a need to know basis. ✓ Act as the key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children. ✓ Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events ✓ Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for Looked After Children. ✓ Ensure speedy transfer of information when a Looked After Children transfers to another educational placement. ✓ Contribute information to, and attend, LAC reviews when required. ✓ Provide regular reports to the Governing Body regarding LAC in the school and relevant policy and practice development. ✓ Liaise with the Social Worker to ensure permissions are sought for school decisions including overnight stays, reports etc. ✓ Liaise with the social worker and/or carer to agree protocols for photograph/video permission i.e. recorded performances, class photographs.	✓ Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children ✓ Positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self esteem ✓ Ensure any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained ✓ Be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support Personal Education Plans, and review meetings ✓ Liaise with the designated teachers where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties ✓ Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions as a last resort ✓ Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals ✓ Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals as appropriate. ✓ Attend PEP and LAC reviews as requested by the Designated Teacher. ✓ Follow their duty of care by ensuring no photographs/videos identifying the child are displayed anywhere. ✓ Follow direction from the Designated Teacher regarding correct permissions.