

Stroud Green Primary School



Believe and achieve

Stroud Green Primary School, part of a richly diverse community, is a place where all children flourish in a safe, happy and stimulating environment.

Policy for the Education of Looked After Children

Policy Originator	Jo Bartlett
Governor Responsible	Sarah Butterworth
Status	Statutory
Last reviewed	7 th November 2016
Ratified on	14 th December 2016
Review period	Biennial
Signed	

This policy is based on Haringey Virtual School's model school policy for the education of looked after children V3 Jan 15, which was revised in January 2015. It is designed to be read in conjunction with the school 'Guidance for looked after children', which provides the detail of school provision for LAC, which can be downloaded from http://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/school_policy_guidance_-_feb_2010_with_logo.doc.

At Stroud Green School we recognise that we play a vital role in providing a stable base for looked after children (LAC), and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. Our school community aims to champion the needs of LAC to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care. We have a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for our LAC. We endeavour to create an environment where LAC have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through the 'local school offer', identified by the school 'audit of need', and funded by the generic Pupil Premium Grant (PPG).

Our staff are trained in the specific needs of LAC, and trauma recovery in particular, so that all adults are sensitive to issues, and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise. We ensure that personal education plans (PEPs) are completed within timescale, with multi-agency representation, as appropriate, and record previous and current attainment data, with consideration of levels of progress. Decisions about spending of the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) is based on the need identified via the PEP process and will be used to accelerate learning and narrow learning gaps.

Our aims for looked after children:

- to provide a safe and secure environment, where education is always central to the planning, and all adults understand the specific needs of LAC
- to narrow the gap between the attainment of children in care and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress
- that they benefit from interventions which are part of the 'school offer', and funded via the generic Pupil Premium (PPG)
- that careful consideration is given at the PEP meeting to the spending of the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP), based on attainment data, levels of progress and the wider interests of the young person
- for all children in care to have a minimum of two PEP meetings in an academic year, and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress
- for all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with at least one key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school and home
- that the key adult:
 - i. identifies at least one adult with whom the child feels safe – this could be the key adult or another member of staff the child chooses
 - ii. identifies and shares the helpful relational qualities of this adult with the network of adults working with the pupil and
 - iii. increases the number of safe adults for the child
- that at least one safe space is identified in the classroom and in the school
- that school systems facilitate discreet support, as appropriate
- LAC will be advantaged within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for
- children in care and their foster families will feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, in recognition of the particular needs of this group

Educational planning for children in care

Personal education plans

The school will ensure that every LAC on roll has a minimum of three PEP meetings every academic year, within the statutory care planning framework, with PEPs reviewed termly in order that the

education planning for LAC remains up to date and 'live'. Additional PEP meetings are recognised as good practice for those children of particular concern. These will take place in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals.

Interventions accessed via the generic PP and spending of the PPP are recorded on the PEP.

We will work with social workers to ensure that PEPs are completed in advance of care planning meetings so that the PEP is available to Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) a minimum of three days before the care planning review in recognition that a care plan is incomplete without a completed PEP and health plan.

Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher and governing body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for LAC. They will ensure that the designated teacher for LAC has qualified teacher status, with appropriate experience to fulfil this statutory role. They will monitor the role of the designated teacher to ensure that all LAC make accelerated and rapid progress, and that all staff receive appropriate training.

The named Governor for looked after children is **Sarah Butterworth**

The Designated Teacher for children in care is **Joanna Bartlett** (Deputy Headteacher).

She is a qualified teacher and will promote improved educational life chances for LAC by:

- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- developing expertise in the field of LAC, especially in trauma recovery
- providing training and offering advice to school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for LAC
- regularly reporting to the Headteacher and governing body on the attainment of children in care, school resource and staff training needs for working with this group (via the annual report to governors)
- prioritising children in care for school-based additional support via the 'school offer' and PPP.
- maintain positive links and access support from the LA Virtual school for LAC

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for LAC by:

- reading the *school policy* and *school policy guidance document* for children in care
- attending training, as appropriate, referring to the designated teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating a 'child in care-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for children in care by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available funded by the generic PP.

Attendance

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of LAC to ensure that all children in care have good attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals as an early intervention, outlined in the attendance policy. The school provides attendance information on LAC to the local authority via Welfare Call.

Admissions / Transitions

School procedures to support children in care during admission and transition include:

- prioritising LAC at the point of admission
- the swift transfer of information between schools
- early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support for LAC at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of impact of broken attachments and loss

Additional educational needs

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for children in care with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional support via the 'school offer', funded by the generic PP; identifying further support, funded by the PPP
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight (*in line with the Lamb Report, December 2009*)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, with an expectation of a minimum of two sub-levels progress each academic year

Special educational needs

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for children in care who have special educational needs by having high expectations, ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision (*in line with the SEND Code of Practice*). They also ensure that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic, ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice, while ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight.

Safeguarding

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on LAC by familiarising themselves with the 'School policy guidance for looked after children' and following the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, if there are safeguarding concerns.

Bullying

School staff recognise the vulnerability of this group to experiencing bullying due to their looked after status and are vigilant to recognise early signs and address immediately, in line with the school policy. We also understand that children and young people who have experienced abuse and/or neglect resulting in developmental trauma are more likely to exhibit behaviours that could be perceived as bullying when they are feeling unsafe and become unregulated. As a staff we work to create a safe environment where children are supported in developing self-regulation skills which in turn will reduce incidences of bullying. We are mindful of the susceptibility of this group to feelings of rejection and will work with children and their carers to manage any incidences sensitively and to avoid exclusion. We will inform the Social Worker and the Virtual School from the LA with specific responsibility for the LAC if any bullying incidents occur.

Exclusion

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a looked after child, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. If in the unlikely event that a period of exclusion is unavoidable, we would make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. We will also work with the local authority to arrange alternative provision from the first day following exclusion (Department for Education's 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' 2015; Sec 3, para 46). School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of LAC.

Multi-agency working

School staff will make every effort to engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to perform their roles successfully and make a positive impact on the education and wider needs of LAC.

The Headteacher, designated teacher and governing body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.