

Dishforth CE Primary School

Looked After Children Policy



Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen...[who] should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

Dishforth CE Primary School designates the SENCO Teacher responsible for Looked After Children (LAC). The SENCO reports to the Head Teacher who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Who are our Looked After Children?

Children and young people become ‘Looked After’ either if they have been taken into Care by the local authority, either via a legal route under The Children’s Act 1989 or where a voluntary agreement has been reached with the birth family. Most LAC will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth family.

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being, in line with Every Child Matters.

Dishforth CE Primary School believes that in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

Dishforth CE Primary School’s approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked

After Children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Early intervention and priority action.
- Listening to children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

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- To champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.
- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our looked after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.

The Head Teacher will:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Support the Designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend any specific training on Looked After Children which is required to ensure that they have the most up to date information on supporting Looked After Children
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children, OFSTED now select a number of Looked After Children, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Review all policies and procedures regularly to ensure that they adequately address the needs of Looked After Children and that those children have access to all aspects of education, particularly with regard to *admissions, curriculum, examinations, extra support, extra-curricular activities, work experience and careers guidance (where applicable)*.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

- *Have a clear and consistent plan for attendance at all PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings (Designated Teacher/Head of Year/ Head of House/class tutor etc) to ensure coherence and efficiency in planning and attaining targets. The members of staff attending need to be free or made free from teaching commitments to attend PEP meetings.*
- *PEP meetings will be called at least annually and more regularly if required.*
- *Papers required for each PEP meeting will be available prior to the start of the meeting or there will be reading time at the start of the meeting if new papers are tabled (see PEP Agenda).*
- *Unless otherwise agreed the child or young person agreed should attend all or part of the meeting and should be released from lessons to do so.*

Following a PEP meeting, Targets and Actions will be circulated to all relevant teaching and support staff immediately after the PEP meeting or as soon as Minutes are received from the Social Worker:

- ***Further details raised at PEP meetings will be circulated to other teaching and support staff on a 'need to know' basis as agreed at the meeting and, in best practice, agreed with the child or young person concerned***
- ***Discuss issues relating to attendance and/or exclusions with the Virtual School Head Teacher or a member of LACES to ensure that there is as little disruption to a child's education as possible. When considering a permanent exclusion, a discussion will be held with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People***

The Designated teacher will:

- Be an advocate for any Looked After Children in the school.
- Maintain an up to date record of all Looked After Children who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or Section 20 accommodation.
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent and carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEND Code of Practice – where appropriate
 - Child Protection information when appropriate.
 - Baseline information, including an assessment of preferred learning styles and all test results.
 - Attendance figures
 - Exclusions
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan for each child/young person to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Statement of Special Education Need, and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.
- Ensure that someone attends Children's Services Reviews on each child/young person and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with LACES on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of Looked After Children.
- Provide the LA with termly attainment data to enable the Virtual School Head Teacher to have clear tracking data for all Looked After Children
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy including access to 1:1 tuition.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Looked After Children where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that Looked After Children, along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of Looked After Children.

- Report to the Governing Body annually on the academic performance; attendance and exclusions of the looked after children who are on the roll of the school.
- Ensure that the school evaluates the performance data for all Looked After Children and that it is recorded in the school's self-evaluation documentation.

Refer to 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children' statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities:

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

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulty. These may be academic; pastoral; behaviour and/or attendance issues
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

The Governing Body will:

- ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the Code of Practice on Admission;
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- nominate the Safeguarding Committee who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body
- for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

- ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school
 - The National Curriculum and public examinations
 - Additional educational support where this is needed.
 - Extra-curricular activities, Work experience and careers guidance.

- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children
- Ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place in the school even if there are no Looked After Children on roll at the time and that the Designated Teacher continues to attend training and is up to date in regards to the legal processes.

Policy adopted: February 2023

Next review date: February 2025