



***Head of School: Mr P. Coiffait***

# **School Policy**

## **Looked After Child (LAC)**

**Co-ordinator: Debbie Fitton**

**To be reviewed on:**

**Governors adopted this policy on:**

**Signed by the Chair:**



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## **Hawthorns School – Looked After Child Policy**

### **Purpose**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children within Hawthorns School

### **Rationale**

Looked after children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of looked after children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that considerable educational underachievement exists when compared to their peers. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'In Care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the Court under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with Foster Carers, in a Children's Home, in a Residential School, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Tameside

### **Introduction**

Hawthorns School aims to promote the educational attainment, achievement and welfare of looked after children.

### **The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Debbie Fitton.**

The governing body is committed to providing a quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of looked after children. Aims

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for looked after children as for all children
- ensure that all looked after children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability

- ensure that looked after students take as full a part as possible in school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of looked after students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that looked after students are involved, where possible, in decisions affecting their future provision.

### **Admissions**

The Governing Body endorses the Tameside Policy for the admission of Looked After Children. Due to changes in care placements, looked after children may enter school at any time in the term. At Hawthorns School we believe that it is vital that all new students receive a positive welcome and full support for their inclusion in our learning community.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC Policy reinforces the need for teaching and learning that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all looked after students.

### **Allocation of Resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with Tameside Virtual School for looked after children and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that looked after children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

### **Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children**

This school assesses each looked after student's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The social worker for the looked after child initiates a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 15 days of the student joining the school, or of entering care, and ensures that the young person is actively involved. Alongside this, the Virtual School SEN caseworker will research to see if there are any SEN needs or concerns of this child that need to be considered or explored. Thereafter, the school will convene the PEP meetings and the social worker will ensure that this happens termly. The PEP is returned to Tameside within two weeks of the PEP meeting. Once returned, it will be read and quality assured by the Virtual School and uploaded onto the Children's Services data system and recorded as PEP completed. This is essential for monitoring and recording that all LAC in Tameside have a current PEP which is a legal requirement by the DfE and also monitored by Ofsted.

Any concerns relating to LAC are passed on to the link Social Worker.

### **Purpose of the PEP**

The PEP is a termly review and record of a Looked After Child's educational progress and attainment. The review is an opportunity for the child to reflect and articulate what is going well and what would help at school in a setting including key people such as carers, teachers and social workers alongside any relevant professionals who may be required such as SEN specialists, Virtual School or mental health professionals. It is the time to celebrate

educational successes of the child and to set appropriate and aspirational targets to ensure a clear pathway of opportunities and successes through the young person's time in care and beyond.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP review meetings and provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, specialist teacher from Tameside Virtual School (or other Virtual School, where the child is from another Local Authority) and other agencies. The allocation and purpose of the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) will be included within the PEP. All PEPs are completed electronically through the online system provided by Welfare Call.

### **PP+ Funding:**

The current PEP funding per child is £600 per term. This is allocated to every school who has completed and returned the PEP documentation within the two weeks following a termly meeting. On the PEP document it needs to be clearly recorded what the PP+ money is being spent on and specified exactly how this will improve the educational outcomes for the child. The exact amount the government allocates per Looked After Child per annum will be £2300 from April 2018. The Virtual School withhold the difference of this to enable a service to support all Looked After Children in Tameside. This includes employing a dedicated SEN caseworker, providing training to VS staff and school staff, providing emergency funding to avoid breakdown of educational placements, support for in year transfers, funding for Alternative provision etc.

The PP+ funding should be used in the best way to improve the educational outcomes for the Looked After Child. This may be to bridge a gap in learning, focus on a weaker area of attainment or accelerate an area of learning where the young person may show a particular aptitude. Examples where it can be used effectively include personalised and specific mentoring sessions to improve attendance and engagement in school; tutoring around a specific area of need; purchasing of additional books or apps to improve knowledge of an area of curriculum need; purchasing of a laptop if there is a clear link to need and the progress that will be made; participation in specific visits or with educational clubs within school. Anything can be suggested and if there is a clear educational outcome and raising of standards with a clear link to the targets outlined in the PEP to be made from utilising this funding that is additional to the usual provision expected from school or carer then the LA will consider it.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher knows all the looked after children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Tameside Virtual School specialist staff, teacher/support worker and social worker. The status of looked after children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available to all classroom teachers and relevant associate staff. LAC are identified as a vulnerable group when tracking, monitoring and reporting on attainment and progress.

### **Staff Development**

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support a LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with LAC within the school and disseminate information.