



TIMOTHY HACKWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Respectful and resilient; being the best that we can be.'

Looked After Children Policy

CRC Article 28: All children have the right to a good quality education

CRC Article 29: All children have the right to be the best they can be.



Date policy approved/adopted:	February 2021
Next review date:	February 2022
Approved by:	Governing Body
Head Teacher signature:	<i>L. Boulton</i>
Chair of Governors signature:	<i>P. Crook</i>

Looked After Children Policy

CRC Article 28: All children have the right to learn.

CRC Article 29: All children have the right to be the best that they can be.

Date of Policy: February 2021

Review Date: February 2022

Designated Lead for Looked After Children: Mrs. L. Boulton - Head Teacher

Designated Teachers for Looked After Children: Mrs. L. Boulton - Head Teacher and Mrs. K. Kozlowski - SENDCO

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. L. Boulton

SENDCO: Mrs. K. Kozlowski

Deputy Safeguarding Leads: Mrs. J. Slattery (Deputy Head Teacher); Mrs. K. Kozlowski (SENDCO); Miss N. Stainsby (Pupils and Families Intervention Support Lead) and Mrs. C. Reid (Assistant Head Teacher).

Governor for Looked After Children: Miss N. Stainsby

Governor for Safeguarding, including Online Safety: Miss N. Stainsby

Our Governing Body

The Governing Body will be provided with regular updates re: the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

The Governing Body will ratify and review the policy.

Our Timothy Hackworth School Vision

May our Rights Respecting School be a happy place for us all to learn; where every one of us is valued and safe in our Timothy Hackworth School Family. May we all be the best that we can be by making a positive difference to each other, our community in Shildon and the wider world in which we all live.

Mission Statement (Written by children)

We would like our school, which reflects British Values, to be at the heart of the community, sharing, supporting and learning together with everyone as equals. Our children have the right to high quality learning experiences to help them to be the best they can be.

We encourage our children to be creative, unique, open-minded and independent individuals, respectful of themselves and of others in our school, our local community and the wider world.

We aim to nurture our children on their journey through life so they can grow into safe, caring, democratic, responsible and tolerant adults who make a positive difference to British Society and to the world.

Timothy Hackworth Primary School Values

Ours is a happy school with high hopes and ambitions for all our children and we welcome working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that everything is done in the best interests of the children at all times.

All of our staff take their responsibility towards the children seriously and they strive to help each child reach their full potential as global citizens physically, emotionally, socially and academically. We are fully committed to the [CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD](#).

To us, every child is unique and precious and we endeavour to foster a high level of motivation towards learning and behaviour. We are committed to the Basic Skills of English and Maths.

At all times, we aim to centre the teaching in an atmosphere of mutual respect and personal respect. A high quality education is [the right of every child](#), and at Timothy Hackworth Primary School, we embrace that responsibility and strive to achieve it for all our pupils.

Equalities Information

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's 'Equalities Policy Statement', 'Equalities Objectives Summary' and 'Equalities Information and Objectives'.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Rationale

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and "normality" for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

Definition

The term "looked after" was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated, (whereby the Local Authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility), or is subject to a care order (whereby a court

order grants shared parental responsibility to the Local Authority in order to protect and promote a child's welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full-time basis.

Legal Framework

Legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of looked after children.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children;
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children;
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and trancies for all looked after children;
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of looked after children;
- Develop systems of communications and protocols;
- Promote the attendance of looked after children.

Objectives

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place;
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes;
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles;
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family;
- Ensure the Designated Teachers are provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate. At Timothy Hackworth Primary School the Designated Teachers are the Head Teacher and the SENDCO;
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the LA inclusion guidance, SEND legislation, and joint DfE / Department of Health guidance;
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies;
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel “different”. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible. The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and Designated Teachers as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked after children. At Timothy Hackworth Primary School, the Head Teacher and the SENDCO are the Designated Teachers.

The Named Governor should be satisfied that:

- the school has a coherent policy for looked after children;
- the school’s policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of inclusion guidance and joint DfE/DH guidelines;
- the Designated Teachers have received appropriate training;
- looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum;
- the Governing Body receives an annual report.

The Head Teacher will:

- assume the role of the Designated Teacher;
- ensure that all Designated Teachers have received appropriate training;
- oversee the development of the policy on looked after children;
- be responsible for all systems to support looked after children;
- report to the Governing Body on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school;
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils;
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils;
 - the number of complaints.

The Designated Teacher:

The Designated Teachers will serve as the contacts for Social Services and the Education Department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school.

The Designated Teachers will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked after children of the school by:

- maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis;
- ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements;
- acting as an advocate for looked after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances.

The Designated Teachers will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children. They will:

- have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after;
- maintain records regarding all looked after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child;
- establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer;
- monitor the educational progress of all looked after children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern.

The Designated Teachers will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-school relationships between parents and carers with regular opportunities for dialogue;
- being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's PEP;
- playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked after children;
- helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings;
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in Social Services and education;
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties;
- inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP).

The Designated Teachers will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- by meeting with the looked after child to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role;
- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues;
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan;
- by requesting support from outside agencies if a looked after child requires additional academic or behavioural support;

- by ensuring all looked after children with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning;
- by having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions;
- by ensuring all looked after children are made to feel a part of the school environment.

Personal Education Plans

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which the Designated Teachers will take the lead in developing, with at least one member of staff who knows the child well attending the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses;
- interests, both in and out of school;
- developmental and educational and pastoral needs;
- future plans, and how these can be supported;
- issues arising for the child;
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

Admission and Induction Arrangements

Looked after children are a priority for admission and as such, we will follow the LA's published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with a Designated Teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and we will ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received, a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a Home-School Book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

School Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors, who will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head Teacher's response.