

**Looked after Children 2024-25**



**Blackwater Academy**



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| **Created By** | Blackwater Academy |
| **Governor’s Approved** | **Yes** |
| **Signed by Chair** |  |
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**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 there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers, which can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Looked After Children progressing to Higher Education and following progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

Our school recognizes the unique needs and challenges faced by looked-after children. We are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment that supports their educational and emotional well-being. This policy aims to ensure that every looked-after child receives appropriate support and equal opportunities to succeed academically and socially.

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 include 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 courts 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 ours.

**Principles:**

1. ﻿﻿﻿Every looked-after child has the right to a quality education that meets their individual needs.
2. ﻿﻿﻿We believe in promoting the well-being and mental health of looked-after children, ensuring they feel safe and supported.
3. ﻿﻿﻿Collaboration and effective communication among all stakeholders is essential in providing consistent support to looked after children.
4. ﻿﻿﻿Ensuring LAC have a PEP that addresses all aspects of education including health and wellbeing and ensures that appropriate support is in place to promote progress.
5. ﻿﻿﻿Ensuring that carers/parents, social workers and virtual school staff (where relevant) are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.

**Personal Education Plan (PEP):**

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

1. ﻿﻿﻿The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a learner to enable them to make the expected progress in all aspects of their academic and personal development and fulfil their potential.
2. ﻿﻿﻿The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
3. ﻿﻿﻿The academy, with other professionals and the child or young person's carers, will use the PEP to support their educational needs, raise their aspirations and improve their life chances.
4. ﻿﻿﻿All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the Designated Teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
5. ﻿﻿﻿PEPs will be reviewed at least three times a year, involving the child, designated teacher, carers, social workers, and any other relevant professionals.

**Responsibilities:**

**Designated teacher**

* ﻿﻿Ensure that children are able to discuss their progress and are involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
* ﻿Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
* ﻿﻿Maintain an up-to-date record of the LAC in school, ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required on a strictly 'need to know' basis and reporting annually to governors, maintaining confidentiality of all LAC and PLAC.
* ﻿﻿Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC to join in extracurricular activities and out-of-schöol learning.  
  Be aware that many LAC and PLAC say they are bullied, so actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
* ﻿﻿Attend training as required and keep fully informed of the latest developments and policies regarding LAC.

**DSL**

* Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker.
* Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

**SENCO**

* Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and previously-LAC.
* Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists, and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-LAC.

**Conclusion:**

Our school is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for looked after children. We aim to nurture their potential, celebrate their achievements, and ensure that they have equal access to opportunities for a successful future. By implementing this policy, we strive to meet the unique needs of looked after children and improve their educational outcomes.