



# Looked After Children Policy

**Summer 2019**

# **Newham “All Schools” Policy for the Education of Looked After Children**

## **1. CONTEXT and PRINCIPLES**

1.1 Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We acknowledge that 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 the Every Child Matters outcomes.

1.2 Helping Looked After Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Newham Council and Newham Schools (whether they be looked after by Newham or another local authority). This policy takes account of all related legislation and guidance including:

- ❑ DfES Statutory Guidance to Governing Bodies: “Supporting Looked After Learners” 2006.
- ❑ The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2007.
- ❑ The Local Authority’s duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the education of looked after children (LAC).
- ❑ “Show Me How I Matter: a guide to the education of looked after children” LGA and IDEA publication 2006.

1.3 *Shaftesbury Primary School’s* approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- ❑ Having high expectations
- ❑ Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- ❑ Promoting attendance
- ❑ Early intervention and priority action
- ❑ Targeting support
- ❑ Minimising exclusions
- ❑ Achieving continuity and promoting stability
- ❑ Listening to children
- ❑ Promoting a wider learning experience (Aim Higher, OSHL etc)
- ❑ Promoting health and wellbeing
- ❑ Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

## **2. ACTIONS**

2.1 As for all our pupils, *Shaftesbury Primary School* is committed to helping every looked after child to achieve the highest standards they can, including out of school activities and supporting career aspirations for

further and higher education. This can be measured by improvements in their achievement and attendance.

2.2 The Governing Body of *Shaftesbury Primary School* is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will adhere to the following statutory requirements in respect of looked after children:

- [*For Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools*] Ensure Looked After Children are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2007 which require admissions authorities to give top priority to LAC in their oversubscription criteria.
- [*For Faith Schools*] Give priority to LAC of their faith ahead of other applicants (NB faith schools are also permitted to give priority to LAC, regardless of faith). Furthermore, it specifies that LAC must be admitted within 20 school days of the application being made.

2.3 Ensure a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is appointed and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.

2.4 Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed in line with statutory and Newham guidance on PEP's for every looked after child. Identify a Nominated Governor for Looked After Children.

2.5 This policy links specifically with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of looked after children when reviewing them and all other policies:

- Oversubscription Criteria
- School Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equalities Policies
- Policy on Racial Harassment
- Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

2.6 *Shaftesbury Primary School* will 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 possible level.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEAD TEACHER**

- 3.1 Appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below. NB Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated teacher not be available to carry out legal duties.
- 3.2 Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission, progress, attendance and exclusions (if any) of looked after children and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- 3.3 Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of looked after children.
- 3.4 Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

### **4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

- 4.1 Identify a Nominated Governor for Looked After Children.
- 4.2 Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of looked after children.
- 4.3 Ensure the school has an overview of the needs of all its looked after children, regardless of their originating authority.
- 4.4 Allocate resources to meet the needs of looked after children.
- 4.5 Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- 4.6 This Governing Body will:
  - 4.6.1 Monitor the academic progress of Looked after children, through an annual report (see below).
  - 4.6.2 Ensure, where relevant, that looked after children are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
  - 4.6.3 Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies, practices and procedures to ensure looked after children achieve and enjoy their time at the school.

4.6.4 Ensure the school has a Designated Teacher for looked after children and that they are enabled and supported, along with the Head Teacher and other staff, to carry out their responsibilities as below:

4.6.5 Receive a report each year setting out:

- The number of looked after pupils on roll (if any) and dates of joining and/or leaving. NB this will include pupils looked after by other local authorities as well as Newham.
- Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
- Their results in SATS, GCSE and other qualifications, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
- The number and duration of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any), as a discreet group and compared to other pupils.
- The destination of pupils who leave the school.

4.7 The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

4.8 Ensure systems are in place to share the above annual report with School Improvement Partners and OFSTED in line with current statutory requirements. In addition to the report, to provide information to the Newham Virtual School team on a termly basis.

## **5. THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

5.1 Government guidance states that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen; who should be an advocate for looked after children, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports their high expectations for them.”

Therefore it is acknowledged that this person be a member of the Senior Management Team. Specialist training, advice and support for the role of Designated Teacher will be provided by The Virtual School. It is also be noted that the remit of OFSTED inspectors and School Improvement Partners now includes a specific focus on LAC, monitoring how the school has promoted their inclusion and attainment, and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them – the designated teacher will play a key role in evidencing this.

## 5.2 Our Designated Teacher will:

- 5.2.1 Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- 5.2.2 Ensure that a PEP is completed with the child, their social worker, carer and other relevant people at least 2 weeks before their statutory reviews.
- 5.2.3 Ensure that each looked after child has an identified member of staff they can talk to: this need not be the designated teacher, as it will be based on the child's own situation and wishes. It should be noted that members of staff who take on this role may also need to make use of appropriate support from, for example, the school's pastoral staff, Child Protection officer, SENCO as appropriate.
- 5.2.4 Track academic and other progress and target support appropriately.
- 5.2.5 Coordinate any support for looked after children that is necessary within the school and from outside.
- 5.2.6 Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- 5.2.7 Facilitate and encourage looked after children to join extra-curricular activities and maximise out of school learning opportunities e.g. "gifted and talented" and "aim higher" projects.
- 5.2.8 Ensure attendance at all PEP and review meetings for each child.
- 5.2.9 Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as needs of looked after children.
- 5.2.10 Set up timely meetings with relevant parties (eg carer, social worker, birth family, other professionals) where a pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or at risk of exclusion.
- 5.2.11 Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and where appropriate between schools.
- 5.2.12 Be pro-active in supporting transitions and planning when moving to a new phase in their education.
- 5.2.13 Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.

5.2.14 Be aware that 60% of looked after children nationally say that they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.

5.2.15 Ensure all required information is collated and sent to The Virtual School every term.

5.2.16 Raise awareness in secondary schools of financial and other supports that are available to looked after children for further and higher education.

## **6. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF**

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 necessary.
- Respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable looked after children achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of looked after children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of looked after children.
- 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 Head Teacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

NB Advice, information and support is available from The Virtual School to staff and Governors about all relevant legislation and procedures relating to children in care as well as issues around specific children.

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