

Bell Farm Primary School



Looked After Children Policy

School Aims

At Bell Farm Primary School, we believe that each pupil has individual and unique needs. We ensure that all children are encouraged, valued and accepted equally, regardless of their ability or behaviour. All pupils should receive appropriate educational provision through a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant and differentiated, and that shows coherence and progression in learning. It is the aim of this school to provide every child with the best education possible. This reflects the UN Convention – The Right of the Child, by ensuring all children have a right to primary education. Some pupils may have Special Educational Needs and experience difficulties in -

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and /or physical and medical conditions

Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after and previously looked after children are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Bell Farm Primary School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum that meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education', current version.
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

Definitions

“Looked after children (LAC)” are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children’s residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

Previously-LAC” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they either have been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Objectives and Aims

At Bell Farm Primary School, we will support looked after children by:

- Making it a priority to know the children well and build strong relationships
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Balance high levels of support with challenge and high expectations
- Ensure consistency
- Work in close partnership with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies
- Link each child to a person to whom they relate well
- Plan for future transitions effectively

Aims

- To closely monitor the academic, social and emotional progress of all looked after children
- To work alongside social workers and other professionals to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes appropriate and challenging targets
- To ensure discretion when addressing a child’s care status and the background and family history of children who are in care, especially surrounding teaching and learning relating to family
- To ensure a clear protocol is followed in the sharing of information, both within school and with outside agencies

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Designated Teacher

The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked after children and previously looked after children learn and achieve. The designated teacher should:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and previously-LAC at the school, this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how looked after children and previously looked after children learn
- Ensure a welcome and smooth transition for the child and their carer.
- Make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets.
- Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning.
- Ensure that the child has an identified member of staff that they can talk with. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Set up urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Working with the Headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.

The Designated Teacher is the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion

The Role of the Governing Body

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:-
- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and previously-LAC safe.

- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the Headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

There is a designated Safeguarding Governor with special responsibility for looked after children.

The Role of the Headteacher

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- To ensure that, in partnership with the Governing body, the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked after children and previously looked after children;
- To make sure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked after children and previously looked after children to achieve;
- In partnership with the Governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher;
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
 - The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
 - Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
 - Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

The Role of All Staff

All staff at Bell Farm Primary School will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after children and previously looked after children
- Ensure that all looked after children and previously looked after children are supported sensitively
- Respond positively to a child's request to be the named member of staff with whom they can talk when they feel it is necessary
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information
- Work to enable the child to achieve stability and success within our school
- Promote the self-esteem of all looked after children, maintaining confidentiality and ensuring that no child is stigmatised in any way

Admission and Induction Arrangements

- Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Surrey Local Authority's published admission criteria.
- On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and pastoral lead. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is comfortable and secure at Bell Farm School.
- Records will be requested from the child's previous school, and as soon as possible, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan (PEP) and also establish early communications.
- At 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 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.)

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in keeping with the Policy Review Cycle. This planned programme of review puts subjects together that have common strands of learning and is included in the School Improvement Plan published in the spring of each year.

Status of Statutory Policy	Date
Authored by Charlotte Hendy, major revision Alison Beardon	January 2014, Major revision February 2020
Policy reviewed	January 2022
Agreed by Staff	January 2022
Agreed by Governors	February 2022
Review	Annually (January 2023)