



## Sheffield Lower School Looked After Child (LAC) Policy

Written by	Adopted by staff	Ratified by governors	Revision due
Assistant Headteacher: Lorraine Freeman	February 2023	Date: May 2023	Spring term 2025

### Introduction

Sheffield Lower School and Governors are committed to providing quality education for all pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This policy sets out the role of Sheffield Lower School in supporting and enhancing the educational experiences of looked after children on its roll.

The school recognises that nationally there is considerable educational under achievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in 'Guidance on The Education of Looked after Children' (Feb 2018) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

A 'looked after child' (LAC) is any child or young person taken into care by the local authority ('in public care'), being accommodated by the local authority or remanded/detained. The child's placement may include living with a relative, emergency care and short or long term formal foster placement.

Looked After Children are recognised to be a very vulnerable group in terms of education and future life chances and may have some or all of the following issues:

- Low self esteem
- Poor education standards due to time out of school
- Delayed social/emotional/cognitive development
- Be bullied or bully others
- Be prone to mental health issues
- Be isolated with few friends
- Have behaviour issues
- Poor attachments to others

The Governing Body of Sheffield Lower School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and, as part of its Corporate Parenting role, will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:

- A named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (This must be a qualified teacher as described in the Statutory Instruments 2009 No 1538)
- A named Designated Governor
- Personal Education Plans (PEP) for all Looked After Children up to the end of Year 11 and beyond this if the young person continues in education and chooses to continue the PEP
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and the issues that affect LAC
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group
- Close working links with the local authority and all other involved professionals including the Virtual School Head teacher (or equivalent) for LAC

## **Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher is currently Mrs Lorraine Freeman who will:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children within the school
- Ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for any new looked after child and carer
- Ensure that a PEP is completed as soon as possible, working jointly with the child and carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings
- Ensure that each child in public care has an identified member of staff who they can talk to (this will usually be the child's form tutor) and where appropriate, a trained peer mentor.
- Co-ordinate support for the child in school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary
- Ensure school staff receive relevant information and training to ensure progress and provide feedback for review meetings
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share very personal information on a need to know basis
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible
- Ensure the child and carer receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events
- Encourage LAC to participate in extracurricular activities and out of hours learning where feasible, ensuring they are provided with any entitlements e.g. free music lessons where appropriate.
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school during any transfer periods
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties or is in danger of exclusion
- Ensure wherever possible that exclusion is a last resort and where absolutely necessary is as short a period as possible seeking partnership arrangements with other schools for provision elsewhere if at all possible.
- Track the progress of LAC within the school to ensure they remain "on track" and identify and ensure appropriate use of Pupil premium to support
- Ensure that returns on LAC are completed as requested by the local authority.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of all staff**

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with and respond to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other review meetings
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's request for information on educational attainment and needs as appropriate
- As with all children, ensure that no LAC is stigmatised in any way
- Provide a supportive climate to ensure that a LAC can achieve stability within the school setting
- Set high aspirations for the education and personal achievement of all LAC
- Positively promote the self esteem of LAC and refer to the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator as appropriate

## **Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body**

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- Be aware of whether the school has any LAC on roll and how many in each year group
- Ensure there is a named Designated Teacher for LAC
- Liaise with the Head teacher to ensure the Designated Teacher is able to carry out her responsibilities in relation to LAC
- Support the Head teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of LAC are met
- Nominate a Governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (any reports must not include the names of LAC)
- Review the effectiveness of this policy as least every three years.

**Confidentiality**

Information on Looked After Children will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know basis'. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained. Any reports to the Governing Body in relation to LAC will not include names of children.

**Training**

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will undertake regular training as provided by the local authority.

**Monitoring and review**

This policy will be monitored by the LAC Co-ordinator and the Governing Body. It will be reviewed every 2 years.