

Hawthorn Tree Primary School

Looked After Children Policy

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Designated teacher: - Mr M Lister Headteacher alongside Mrs C Knight as Lead Learning Mentor

Governor: with responsibility for Looked After Children: Mrs P Elton

Hawthorn Tree Primary School recognise that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorse Lincolnshire County Council (Virtual School) policy and welcomes Looked after Child (LAC) who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Lincolnshire.

This policy refers to “The Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014” and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

Hawthorn Tree Primary School’s approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked after Children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education set within an inclusive context which makes reasonable adjustments to ensure a personalised curriculum
- Listening to the Looked after Child
- Understanding that where a child’s status changes to being a post-Looked after Child (due to adoption, a Special Guardianship or Residence Order), the child’s educational needs are unlikely to have changed
- Working closely with home, voluntary and statutory agencies
- Promoting attendance, through a programme of early intervention, priority action, reducing exclusions and promoting stability within a positive learning environment
- Identifying need, including social and emotional as well as learning needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities
- Targeting support, including accessing resources from other agencies as well as provision from school resources
- Having high expectations

1. Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Looked after Children and post-LAC are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Barriers to their progress include a high level of disruption and change in school placements, lack of motivation or involvement in extra curricular activities.

Hawthorn Tree Primary School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Looked after Child and post-LAC can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that LAC are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being, in line with Every Child Matters. We recognise the importance of getting to know and treating every LAC or post-LAC as an individual and ensure we facilitate full participation in every aspect of school life including extra-curricular events and residential trips.

2. Admission Arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

The school recognises that looked after children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Looked after Children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DCSF Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked after Children (England) Regulations 2006)

3. Support and Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Looked after Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

4. Pupil Premium Plus

LAC and post-LAC attract Pupil premium Funding of £1900 per year. The school recognises that this funding must be used creatively and in response to the individual pupil's needs. This funding may be used to provide Learning Mentor support, access to funded extra-curricular activities or residential trips, 1:1 tuition in English or Maths or Music tuition. The school will assess the individual pupil and put together a support package. The school will complete a Pupil Premium Plus tracking which will show the interventions, impact and individual costings.

5. Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher and Learning Mentor

The duties of the Designated Teacher and Learning mentor will include:

- Ensuring that Looked after Children are welcomed into the school, necessary meetings are held and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed. Children and carers will be immediately linked to the school's Learning Mentor as the first point of contact alongside the class teacher and the child will be linked with class buddies. The learning mentor will closely monitor the child settling into the school, ensuring they are developing relationships with peers

- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked after Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of post-Looked after Children in school where the parent or guardian has informed the school that the child has been adopted from care or has left care under a Special Guardianship or Residence Order
- Monitoring and tracking progress of Looked after Children and post-LAC in school and intervening if there is evidence of individual underachievement
- Holding a supervisory brief for all children being looked after and acting as advocate for the LAC in school
- Liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school so that everyone involved in helping LAC and post-LAC achieve are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families and understand the reasons which may be behind a LAC's behaviour
- Establishing and maintaining regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies concerned, including the local authority
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Looked after Children

6. Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The Designated Teacher and Learning Mentor will keep an up-to-date record of Looked after Children and Young People and post-LAC in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff. The social worker will be expected to provide the school with details stating under which section of Children Act 1989 the child is being Looked After by the Local Authority and who holds parental responsibility.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated as a joint process with the school and social worker within 10 school days of the Looked after Children and Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC/YP Every six months after the child's LAC review with the IRO. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly. The school will continue to have a PEP for post-LAC to ensure that their educational needs continue to be met.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at the point of transition.

It is vital that the Looked after Child or Young Person is aware of information being collated and their wishes and feelings recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

7. Exclusions

Hawthorn Tree Primary School recognises that Looked after Children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and perhaps alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

8. Staff Development and Training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher and Learning Mentor are kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked after Children. This will include attending LAC network meetings.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked after Children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Looked after Children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with the appropriately.

9. Home-School Liaison

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked after Children to achieve their potential.

Consultation evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working. The school's Learning Mentor will ensure close working relationship with the parents/ carers.

10. Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked after Child or Young Person including Social Care Teams; Community Educational Psychologist; Health Services; CAMHS and the Youth Offending Team.