The Education of Children Looked After and Previously Looked-After Children policy

Key points and summary

Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with a high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning.

Harrow High aims to ensure excellent practice in supporting and promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children. This support will not be seen in isolation but in a wide range of support within the school combined with offers from external agencies

DfE statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities is found here;
The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children Feb 2018

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Responsible for review: DHT Behaviour

Published on website: yes (part of Safeguarding suite)

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society
- DT refers to the Designated Teacher

Responsibilities

Governors

The Governing body of Harrow High School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Governing Board recognises the need to champion performance, for children looked after (CLA) and previously looked after children (PLAC) and is committed to improving outcomes for them.

The Governors will;

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA and PLAC
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher (DT) for CLA and PLAC
- through the Headteacher and DT, hold the school to account on how it supports its CLA and PLAC (including how the Pupil Premium Plus is used) and their level of progress
- be aware of whether the school has CLA and PLAC and how many (the children will remain anonymous in any reports)
- liaise with the HT to ensure that the DT is enabled to carry out their responsibilities in relation to CLA and PLAC
- ensure the DT is able to access training needed to fulfil their role. DTs should have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of CLA and PLAC.
- ensure support to the HT, DT and other staff in ensuring the needs of CLA and PLAC are met
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

The Designated Teacher (DT)

The way in which the role of the designated teacher is carried out will depend on the number of looked-after and previously looked-after children on roll and their individual needs. Not all aspects of the role of the designated teacher need necessarily be carried out by a single individual. While lead responsibility for raising attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children on roll must rest with the designated teacher, the school will decide how functions within it, including pastoral and administrative tasks, are most appropriately delegated to suit the current circumstances.

The Designated Teacher will;

- be the central point of initial contact within Harrow High School. The DT ensures that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning
- have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every CLA and PLAC on the school's roll
- take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the barriers to learning for some CLA and PLAC

- promote the educational achievement of CLA and PLAC by contributing to the development and review of whole school policies. For instance, parents and carers understand that they would not be given preferential treatment regarding children taking holidays during term-time, unless in extenuating circumstances.
- promote good home-school links; carers and parents are aware of the DT's role within the school and communications are effective
- work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding CLA and PLAC are quickly and effectively responded to
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for CLA within school in partnership with the child's social worker, carer and other key professionals. Meetings can be held either face-to-face or remotely, depending upon the needs of the child
- be accountable for the school's Pupil Premium Plus spend
- ensure that school applications for CLA and PLAC are prioritised and responses to the child's Local Authority (LA) are within 7 days and that children are given a start date
- regularly undertakes audits of CLA and PLAC practice across the school; the findings inform future policies and any actions are followed through promptly.

Lead Professional delegated with DT responsibility

Any staff that is delegated to be the Lead Professional for a particular CLA or PLAC will act as if they are the DT for that learner. All the points made in the section above will then apply. Staff such as SALs or the Inclusion AHT may be delegated these responsibilities because they have more direct and day-to-day contact and can more effectively play a role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Ultimate responsibility will reside with the whole school DT.

All Staff

All staff in this school will:

- have high expectations of CLA and PLAC's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour
- understand how important it is to see CLA and PLAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status
- appreciate the central importance of the PEP for CLA in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.
- (for PLAC) understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress.

Working with the Virtual School

The DT will contact the Virtual School (VS) for advice, information or guidance as required and will ensure that the VS is:

- invited to a professionals' meeting pertaining to any escalation of behaviours; the VS is given the opportunity to explore alternative solutions to a fixed or a permanent exclusion of a child.
- named on the child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) referral
- in receipt of the child's PEP within statutory timescales.
- made aware of any specific training or development needs. DTs should keep their knowledge current; regular attendance at the DT and DSL termly seminars and other training on offer by the VS is encouraged.