

West Coker Primary School



Looked After Children Policy

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**Approved by the Governing Body of West Coker Primary
School in March 2021**

Headteacher

Phil Hyland

Chair of Governors

[Signature]

Proposed Date of Future Review March 2024

School Policy for Children Looked After at West Coker CofE VC Primary School

This policy should be taken and used as part of West Coker Church of England Primary School's overall strategy and implemented within the context of our vision, instrument of government aims and values as a Church of England School.

Who are our Children Looked After?

Children and young people become "Looked After" either if they have been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most Children Looked After will be living with foster parents but a smaller number may be in children's residential units, living with a relative or even be placed at home with their birth parents. Since the White Paper 'Care Matters' of July 2007 the term "Children in Care" is also in use.

The governing body of West Coker CofE VC Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. We fully subscribed to the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters and, therefore, the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need in order to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

For Children Looked After it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared with their peers, and this governing body is committed to implementing the principles and practice as outlined in:

- DfEE Circular 0269/2000
- DfEE/DOH Guidance 2000
- A Better Education for Children in Care. Social Exclusion Unit. Sept. 2003
- Children Act 2004, specifically

***"The duty to safeguard looked after children,
to promote their educational achievements
and to ensure they are able to achieve and
reach their full potential"***

Section 52 Children Act 2004

- Care Matters: Time for Change DfES June 2007

The 2000 Guidance introduced key measures, in order to improve multi-agency coordination and improve educational life chances for Children Looked After including Designated Teachers for Children Looked After and the introduction of a Personal Education Plan for each pupil.

The designated teacher for Children Looked After is Mr Philip Hyland (Head of School).

Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:

- have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- are 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 looked-after child's PEP 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; and
- for previously looked-after children, 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 at school.

(See the appendix below for a full list of roles and responsibilities)

Care Matters has broadened and strengthened the support considered appropriate for Children in Care from birth to leaving care.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that the following roles and responsibilities are carried out effectively in order to fulfil the school's duty regarding these pupils.

Review March 2024

SCHOOL POLICY FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body	Designated Teacher	Whole School Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises children looked after according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Children Looked After <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure there is a designated teacher for Children Looked After <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with the headteacher, designated teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of Children Looked After are met <input type="checkbox"/> Nominate <i>a governor with responsibility for CLA who links with the designated teacher</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Receive regular reports from the designated teacher which should include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> the number of Children Looked After on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan <input type="checkbox"/> their attendance, compared to other pupils <input type="checkbox"/> their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils <input type="checkbox"/> the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> the destinations of pupils who leave the school <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Children Looked After equal access in respect of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Admission to school <input type="checkbox"/> National Curriculum and examinations both academic and vocational <input type="checkbox"/> Out of school learning and extra curricular activities <input type="checkbox"/> Work experience and careers guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Annually, review the effective implementation of the school policy for Children Looked After 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Be an advocate for Children Looked After <input type="checkbox"/> Attend relevant training for Children Looked After <input type="checkbox"/> Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and individuals in relation to Children Looked After seeking advice from Somerset's Children Looked After Advisory Teachers when appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all Children Looked After receive a positive reintegration on entering the school <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all Children Looked After have an appropriate Personal Education Plan and that it is completed within 14 days of joining the school or of entering care (see Somerset's Guidance on Personal Education Plans) <input type="checkbox"/> Keep Personal Education Plans and other records up to date and reviewed appropriately <input type="checkbox"/> Convene an urgent multi professional meeting if a Child Looked After is experiencing difficulties or at risk of exclusion. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential/personal information on a need to know basis. <input type="checkbox"/> Act as the key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to Children Looked After. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events <input type="checkbox"/> Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for Children Looked After <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure speedy transfer of information when a Child Looked After transfers into another educational placement. <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute information to CLA reviews when required. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide regular reports to the Governing Body regarding CLA in the school and relevant policy and practice development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Children Looked After <input type="checkbox"/> Positively promote the raising of a Child Looked After's self esteem <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure any Child Looked After is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Be familiar with the Guidance on Children Looked after and respond appropriately to requests for information to support Personal Education Plans, and review meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Respond positively to the request to be a Child Looked After's named person <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with the designated teachers where a Child Looked After is experiencing difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions as a last resort, in line with Somerset's exclusion advice <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals <input type="checkbox"/> Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals as appropriate.