

Cheam Park Farm Junior School

Looked after Children Policy

Introduction

All schools are required to have a policy for Looked After Children (LAC) which is subject to review and approval from the Governing Body. Every Sutton state school therefore has a designated teacher for looked after children.

Role of the local authority

This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and associated guidance on the education of Looked after Children.

The name of the local authority department responsible for Looked After Children is the LACES team. It aims to raise the educational achievement of children looked after by the Council to improve and promote their life chances. Education is seen as the route through which children can achieve a better future. The LACES team works closely with social services, schools, carers and other relevant agencies to improve and monitor the education outcomes of children in public care. The service supports the educational needs of children who are looked after by Sutton Council and also the educational needs of looked after children from other local authorities who are placed in Sutton schools. As a corporate parent it is the local authority's joint responsibility (with other agencies) to ensure that effective strategies are in place which enable children in public care to fulfill their potential.

Objective

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children.

Our aim at Cheam Park Farm Junior School is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. We aim to create a positive atmosphere, based on respect for people's differences which includes the promotion of educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body welcomes LAC who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in the school's catchment area.

Rationale **Every Child Matters**

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 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. Cheam Park Farm Junior 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 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.

Cheam Park Farm Junior School's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked after Children is based on:

- Prioritising education in an inclusive context which makes reasonable adjustments to ensure a personalised curriculum where needed.
- Listening to the Looked after Child.
- Working closely with home, voluntary and statutory agencies.
- Promoting attendance, through 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.

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)

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.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Staff

The designated teacher for LAC at Cheam Park Farm Junior School is:
Mrs Sharon Gleed-Smith

The duties of the Designated Teacher 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 are identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed
- 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.
- Monitoring and tracking progress of Looked after Children 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, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs may face.
- Establishing and maintaining regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensuring PEP review meetings are held regularly and information passed to all those concerned, including the local authority.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Looked after Children.

The role of the named Governor

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of looked after pupils in the school.
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions.
- Pupil destinations.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked after children have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum.
- Extra Curricular Activities.
- Additional Educational Support

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked after Children and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked after Child or 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. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

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 point of transition.

It is vital that the Looked after Child is aware of information being 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.

Exclusions

Cheam Park Farm Junior 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 minimize the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child both pastorally and academically.

All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy (appendix) for more information.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked after Children.

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 those who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

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.

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 Youth Offending Teams.

Review

A review of this policy will take place at the end of the academic year 2013. Any changes will be agreed by staff and governors.