

Middlewich High School



Cared for Children and Previously Cared for Children Policy 2019

Agreed by staff and governors: December 2012

Reviewed: June 2015, January 2019

Next review date:

Achievement for all

Context

There is a duty on schools to have policies in place to support Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children. This Policy reflects the guidance laid out in DfE's document, 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children- Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, February 2018'. This statutory guidance from the Department for Education, is issued under sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

- 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; (in Cheshire East these children are referred to as 'Cared-for')
- 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
- 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.
- Wherever possible, the local authority will work in partnership with parents and many children and young people in care retain strong links with their families and many eventually return home. An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is provided for every cared for child and young person aged 0-18 years. All Independent Reviewing Officers are separate and independent of social workers and so can question if children and young people are receiving the best care and support services possible.
- if a child is privately fostered they are not a Cared for Child.

Rationale:

All schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of a cared for child/ previously cared for child. This includes a particular duty to promote the child's educational achievement. The Children and Families Act 2014 requires Local Authorities in England to appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging the Local Authorities duty to promote the educational achievement of its Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children. That person within Cheshire East is the Virtual School Head (VSH).

Many Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. 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. They may find it harder to trust adults; their educational experience may have been disrupted; their capacity to build and maintain relationships and friendships may be impaired.

Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children are more likely to experience the

challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.

Aims:

Middlewich High School is committed to improving the educational achievement of all Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children so that they are able to maximise their achievement and attain their full potential by receiving appropriate support according to their assessed needs.

As such all staff will have high aspirations and expectations of each child, promoting education as valuable in itself or as preparation for transition into adulthood.

A supportive school can be the key to success and can enhance life chances. For our Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children this school aims to provide positive experiences and to offer stability, safety, continuity, and individual care and attention.

Statutory Guidance

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Arrangements for Placement of Children Regulation 4 & Schedule 3
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 Care Planning Placement and Case Review
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Admissions Code)
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils) (England) Regulations 2009
- Statutory Guidance: Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England 2017

Management

Middlewich High School will work with the VSH, Social Workers and carers to ensure that the educational needs of a child can be met. The school has a named member of the Senior Leadership Team, The Designated Teacher, who has overall responsibility for and who will monitor and support Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children and champion their needs in order for them to engage successfully in education. A member of the Governing body will also be named.

An up-to-date record will be kept of all cared for and previously Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children, which gives information about their school placement and educational progress. This record includes attainment and progress data as well as assessment of how well current needs are being met.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- appoint a Designated Teacher for Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children who has appropriate seniority, professional experience and status to provide leadership, training, information and advice to others
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support to fulfil their role
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children.

Designated Teacher

Within the School the designated teacher will:

- maintain a register of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children
- maintain, through training, up to date information on specific procedures for all Local Authorities, who have placed Cared for Children at the school.
- ensure that relevant agencies receive information to enable them to identify the needs of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children and to put into place actions to address those needs
- manage the Pupil Premium Plus, ensuring that it is used to the specific needs of each Cared for Child and that the impact of this is monitored via Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings
- ensure that systems are in place that enable children to have an opportunity to contribute to their PEP and understand what the plan means for them
- promote the educational achievement of every Cared for and Previously Cared for Child on the school's role
- provide strategic leadership across the school to ensure that all staff understand and respond positively and with sensitivity to the individual needs of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children
- ensure that behaviour management policies recognise and make suitable provision for the needs and difficulties of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children's learning
- promote a culture in which Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- produce regular reports on the provision for, and progress of, Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children to the Governing Body
- prevent, wherever possible, the exclusion of a Cared for Child, in line with the LA policy
- ensure school procedures for welcoming pupils new to the school are followed when a Cared for, or Previously Cared for Child joins the school, particularly as a mid-year admission

- promote the involvement of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children in extra-curricular activities both during and after the school day
- identify signs of potential mental health issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- understand the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on cared for and previously cared for children and their ability to engage in learning and ensure other school staff are aware that these issues will continue to affect previously cared for children, and that the school will need to continue to respond appropriately to their needs.

Beyond the School the Designated Teacher will:

- be a central point of initial contact for others beyond the school and ensure that arrangements are in place within the school to facilitate effective co-operation with other professionals, especially the Virtual School Head (or equivalent)
- report to the Virtual School on the progress, targets, achievements and levels of attainment of Cared for Children
- ensure that prompt annual collection of results of public examinations Cared for Children is available for the Virtual School
- work closely with the Cared for/ Previously Cared for Child's carers and promote good home-school links
- ensure school policies in relation to, for example, home-school agreements, time-keeping and attendance, homework diaries and parents' evenings are communicated to carers and social workers and, where appropriate, birth parents
- provide advice about the likely impact of disrupting the child's education if changes of care placement occur
- ensure education records are received/passed on if a Cared for/ Previously Cared for Child transfers school and support the transition process
- be involved in any discussion related to decisions about potential exclusions of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children and make sure that the authority which looks after the child and the child's carers are involved in any discussion/decision about exclusion
- develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training/networking events
- disseminate information to school staff as appropriate
- attend training provided locally, regionally or nationally

All Staff

All staff will be aware of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children in their classes and give them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision and positive discrimination whilst preserving confidentiality and showing sensitivity and understanding.

They will help Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children to achieve by:

- having high expectations of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children's involvement in learning and educational progress
- ensure reports on progress for the PEP review meetings are given to the designated teacher in a timely fashion
- being aware of the social, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families

- understanding the reasons which may be behind a Cared for Child's behaviour and why he/she may need more support than other children.
- appreciating the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's Cared for status
- being aware that, for many Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children, bullying is an issue; ensuring that the school's anti-bullying policy operates
- ensuring that Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children have every opportunity to participate fully in the national curriculum, examinations, careers guidance, extra curricular activities, work experience and additional educational support
- ensuring there is sensitivity to the background of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children in teaching, especially in work on families and/or family trees
- respecting the confidentiality of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children and ensure that any information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis
- taking appropriate action as soon as there may be any problems with behaviour or attendance
- ensuring that any Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children who may have learning difficulties are appropriately supported/assessed/resourced

Admissions

Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children will be given priority when requesting places even when the school is already full, in accordance with the Schools Admissions Code and Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol.

Attendance

Attendance of Cared for Children/Previously Cared for Children at school is monitored on a daily basis and any issues which arise are addressed by the school, with the agreement of the social worker and carer.

Exclusions

In line with DfE statutory guidance, every practical means will be explored to avoid fixed term exclusions and no Cared for Child will be permanently excluded without discussion with the Virtual School Head. Middlewich High School will always seek to provide alternative provision (external isolation) at another local high school in place of a fixed term exclusion, unless this is agreed to not be in the best interests of the child. School will provide work for an excluded child from the first day of the exclusion.

If a fixed term exclusion/alternative provision is deemed unavoidable then the Virtual School Head will be informed and actions taken to ensure a smooth re-integration back into school as soon as possible.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All Cared for Children will have a PEP which records their educational strengths and weaknesses and makes clear what needs to happen in order for them to achieve good educational outcomes.

The PEP outlines a personalised approach with high expectations and aspirations and develops personal skills to enhance life chances.

Initial PEPs should be carried out within 10 days of a child coming into care and are then reviewed at least once every school term.

Pupil premium is used to fund actions which will support increasing the progress, achievement and attainment of the child and the spending of this will be monitored by Virtual School Head.

Requests for funding to support needs which cannot be met by the Pupil Premium will be considered by Virtual School Head. (Pupil Premium Plus)

Students are invited to attend their PEP meeting and to complete the 'My Voice' section of the PEP.

PEPs are available for each statutory Care review.

Where a Cared for Child also has SEND, in particular those who have an Education Health Care Plan it may be more appropriate for the SENCO or Resourced Provision Lead teacher to coordinate the PEP and support for that student to ensure that the actions being undertaken by the school support the needs and targets as described in the Education Health Care Plan.