



Walter Infant School and Nursery

'To be the best I can be'

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUS LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

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Mission Statement:

Walter Infant School and Nursery is an equitable, safe, secure and happy place to learn; our children grow as individuals in a stimulating and exciting environment which values respect, kindness, honesty, empathy and resilience.

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Introduction

a. What, why and who?

What is meant by the term 'looked after child'?

A **Looked After Child** (also referred to as a Child **Looked After**) is a child in the care of a Local Authority either: through a Care Order made by a Court or. voluntary agreement with their parent(s) to accommodate them.

Under a Care Order (Section 31 of the Children Act 1989)

This is a court order and the local authority shares parental responsibility with parents. A care order will be made when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm and the making of the order would be better for the child than if no order was made. A care order can last until the child is 18, or an alternative order is made eg-adoption or the order is discharged.

An Interim Care Order places the child into the care of the local authority and allows the court a period of time to decide whether or not a full order should be made.

Accommodated (Section 20 of the Children Act 1989)

Parents retain primary responsibility with the local authority acting as a corporate parent.

A person with parental responsibility can remove the child from local authority accommodation at any time, without giving notice.

Section 44

An 'Emergency Protection Order' is sometimes issued in an urgent situation where a child is suffering or likely to suffer, harm or abuse and is a temporary arrangement pending an Interim Care Order hearing.

The Corporate Parent

This phrase captures the responsibility that we all share to help to bring up those children who cannot be cared for by their birth parents. The responsibility that the whole local authority, including schools, share is to care about, not just to care for, our Looked after Children. This is a wide ranging demand and to successfully achieve it, all agencies and all staff have some level of 'corporate' responsibility and can have some part to play. 'As the corporate parent of children in care, the state has a special responsibility for their well-being. Like any good parent, it should put its own children first. That means being a powerful advocate for them to receive the best of everything'.

Care Matters: Transforming lives of the Children and Young People in Care, DfES 2006

Looked after children have a right to expect the outcomes we want for every child to achieve these outcomes for looked after Children, LAs as their 'corporate parents' should demonstrate the strongest commitment to helping every child they look after to achieve the highest educational standards he or she possibly can'.

Promoting the educational Achievement of Looked After Children, Statutory Guidelines for LAs, DCSF 2010

Why do children become looked after?

- The main reasons why children become looked after are;
- Family breakdown as a result of bereavement or illness.
- Abuse or neglect.
- Family is unable to provide adequate care.

Who is looked after?

At any one time, there will be approximately seventy five children who are looked after by Wokingham and approximately two-thirds of this number will be of statutory school age. Many of our looked after children will not be educated in Wokingham and similarly there will be approximately thirty children at any one time from other local authorities who live in Wokingham and are educated in our schools.

b. Legislation regarding looked after children.

Key legislation that underpins the legal status of looked after children include the following;

Section 52 of the Children Act 2004, places a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children and to develop personal education plans (PEPs) as part of the care plan. Local authorities as the 'corporate parents', must demonstrate the strongest commitment to helping every child they look after to achieve the highest educational standards possible.

The Children and Young Person Act 2008 , requires governing bodies to appoint a designated teacher for looked after children , and to follow statutory guidance.

The **OfSTED** inspection framework for schools and local authorities, places high importance upon the support and achievement of vulnerable pupils, including those pupils who are looked after.

The Achievement Gap

When we compare the attainment and progress for the majority of individual looked after children, they under achieve in comparison with their peers. This gap in achievement and progress make it especially important that we carefully and systematically monitor the progress of our looked after children. This is not only at the end of education milestones such as key stage assessments, at GCSE or at A level, but also at regular moments throughout the school year.

The PEP is an important document in the process to discuss, share, review and assess progress towards individual learning targets. Templates of the Wokingham PEPs are included in the appendices of this handbook and also available on www.wokingham.gov.uk

What should happen when a child becomes looked after?

The designated social worker will contact the school to advise that the child has become looked after and convene a meeting to create a personal education plan (PEP). A PEP must be created within ten school days from the date a child becomes looked after.

The PEP meeting will be attended by the social worker, the Head teacher for looked after children, the foster carers, the parents in some cases, the designated teacher and where appropriate, the child.

The designated teacher is required to chair the meeting and create/circulate the PEP for children in Wokingham schools who are looked after by Wokingham Borough Council. If, however ,the child is from another Local Authority , the external local authority is responsible for chairing PEP meetings and creating/circulating the documents.

Thereafter, PEP review meetings should be held every six months, but for children who are looked after by Wokingham, the expectation is that PEPs are held every term in Sept/Oct. Jan/Feb and May/June.

What is the role of the Designated Teacher?

The role of the designated teacher is to;

- Keep the school register for looked after children up to date and be the central point of contact for all enquires.
- Liaise regularly with foster carers, social workers and head teachers for looked after children.
- Ensure that all looked after children have an up to date PEP and the agreed actions are advanced.

- Monitor the progress and attendance of looked after children, and ensure that the school is providing appropriate programmes of study, interventions and personal support.
- Provide strategic leadership across the school to ensure that all teachers, learning support and other school staff understand and respond positively and with sensitivity to the individual needs of looked after children on roll.
- Provide an annual report to the governing body.
- Ensure all staff receives appropriate training and updates on all issues regarding looked after children.
- Contribute to statutory annual reviews of looked after children.
- Ensure that all delegated resources for Looked After Children are targeted appropriately and made an impact on the learning of looked after children.
- Maintain a culture of high expectations for looked after children and acts as the champion for children in public care.

What do Governors need to know?

The 2008 Children and Young Persons Act placed a duty upon governing bodies to ensure that they designate a teacher who has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of the schools looked after children. (The act stipulates that it must be a teacher who has this responsibility) This is the case whether or not the school has any looked after children currently on roll. Statutory guidance for governing bodies, (The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher Looked After Children DSSF-2009), includes the requirements that they receive an annual report from their designated teacher and they ensure that the designated teacher has the necessary support and training in order to undertake their duties.

Governors need to know how and why looked after children come into care, the number of looked after children on roll and how well they are performing compared to other young people in their school. They should know that there are national and local targets for looked after children around end of key stage tests and GCSEs. They should know the name of their school's designated teacher and how the school specifically supports this group of young people. They should be aware that the attendance of this specific group is closely monitored as well as any incidents of fixed term or permanent exclusions.

The Pupil Premium Governor will also be responsible for ensuring that the rights and expectations of all Looked After Children are met at Walter Infant School and Nursery.

The Virtual School

Initiated by 'Care Matters, Time for Change', all local authorities were advised to support raising the educational attainment and achievement of their looked after children through the overarching support of a 'virtual school'.

Wokingham's virtual school for looked after children provides support and challenge to schools, education providers, social work teams and other key partners in the form of advice, guidance, information, training and additional resources – as well as monitoring and tracking individual outcomes of all looked after children.

The Wokingham virtual schools team consists of;

- A Head teacher for Looked After Children.

- A designated Educational Psychologist.
- The Principal Educational Welfare Officer.
- A designated Data Officer.
- A designated Special Needs Officer.
- A designated Early Year's Officer.
- A designated officer from the Disabled Children's Team.
- The Principal Youth Service Officer.
- and Managers from the three Children's Care Teams.

Admissions

When a child becomes looked after, it is important that their school place is maintained as school offers stability and familiarity. However, there will be occasions when circumstances necessitate a change of school.

Current legislation supporting the admission of Looked After Children requires that:

- A school place should be found as quickly as possible.
- Schools' admission authorities are required to give looked after children the highest priority in their admission arrangements and over subscription criteria (from September 2013, this will extend to those who have been adopted, have a Special Guardianship or Residence Order)
- Class size regulations allow for the admission of a looked after child as an excepted child if admitted outside the normal admission round but only for the remainder of that academic year after which qualifying measures must be taken.
- Changes effective from September 2013 will allow schools to continue to treat any pupil placed as an exception to infant class size, as an excepted pupil until they leave Key Stage 1 or the number on roll in the affected year group returns to its admission number.
- Local Authorities have the power to direct schools admission authorities to admit looked after children. It also provides for those authorities to appeal.

Exclusions

- Continuity and stability is vital for children already suffering disruption in their family life and exclusion from school can place a considerable strain on care placements. Those schools that are most successful in preventing exclusion have policies which tackle the underlying causes of poor behaviour and have clear strategies such as pastoral support plans, behaviour support plans as well as support from the SEN framework .
- If a looked after child is to be excluded from school it should be the absolute last resort. No looked after child should be excluded before a discussion has taken place in the first instance, with the Head teacher for Looked After Children and the child's social worker has been informed. The protocol will then ensure that both care and educational provision are maintained.

Additional Resources

In recognition of its corporate parent responsibilities, Wokingham offers a range of additional resources to support schools in their work with looked after children.

A-The Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium is a grant for looked after children from central government that is distributed by Wokingham on a termly basis. Eligible children must have been looked after continually for at least six months and be of statutory school age (reception –year 11) The

grant should be used to fund the educational needs of the child as identified and recorded in the PEP.

B-The Pupil Education Allowance.

Pupil Education allowances are additional resources provided by Wokingham. The purpose of the funding is to provide additional, personalised support for a child who is at risk of falling behind in their education. The funding can also be used to enhance the personal development of a looked after child. The PEP should record the allocation and impact of this additional funding.

C-Laptops

Wokingham provides all secondary aged pupils and those in further or higher education with a laptop computer.

D- The Letterbox Book Club

Wokingham subscribes to the national scheme that provides literary and numeracy books to pupils in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 at key stage two and years 7 and 8 at key stage three. These materials are mailed to home and aim to encourage home working and support from foster carers

E-Music Tuition

All children looked after by Wokingham are able to access free instrumental or vocal specialist music tuition for pupils. In the Berkshire area, specialist provision is usually provided by Berkshire Maestros , who are the designated providers of music services for Wokingham Borough Council as part of the DFE/Arts council funded 'Berkshire Music Hub' arrangements. A musical instrument is also provided if required.

Useful Contacts

Sian Biddlecombe - Virtual Headteacher
email at sian.biddlecombe@wokingham.gov.uk or call 07717 348 550.

Here 4U Children and Young People Team
46, Church Road, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4QJ
Tel: 0118 9088386

Brambles Area Team
Budes Gardens, Wokingham, RG40 1PX
Tel: 0118 9876161

Ambleside Area Team
Ambleside Close, Woodley , Reading ,RG5 4JJ
Tel: 0118 3776444

Highwood Children's Disability Team
Fairwater Drive, Woodley , Reading , RG5 3JE
Tel: 0118 9746890

Education Welfare Service
Brambles, Budes Gardens, Wokingham, RG40 1PY
Tel: 0118 9746194

Appendices

The Education Strategy for Looked After Children Summary. The full version can be accessed on; www.wokingham.gov.uk

WOKINGHAM EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SUMMARY

OUR PRIORITY

Our main priority is to improve the educational provision and outcomes of all looked after children by;

Having a **Head teacher for looked after children** who is **championing and tracking the progress of all Looked After Children** and making appropriate interventions to support and challenge schools.

Ensuring that **all Council professionals prioritise** the education interests of looked after children in their work and those working most directly with looked after children meet regularly as an **Education Team**.

Ensuring that **Council governance** is challenging the education outcomes of looked after children and is promoting the education focusing the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Strengthening school leadership for education provision and outcomes of looked after children, including the effective roles of Designated Teachers and Governing Bodies.

To achieve this priority we aim to;

- Improve the **quality of Personal Educational Plans** as a means to ensure that all looked after children reach their full academic potential.
- Ensure that all looked after children between the ages of two and four receive their **statutory free entitlement to early years education**.
- Ensure that all **looked after children are assessed at age two** in line with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Ensure that no looked after child is without **full-time, continuous education**.
- Ensure that all looked after children receive **a place at their first choice school in the state funded sector**.
- Provide **support and advice to Care Leavers with regard to post -16 education opportunities/ career paths**.
- Ensure that **education resources are appropriately targeted to the needs of looked after children**, including access to the latest learning technologies, additional literacy and numeracy materials, and extra one to one tuition.

Strategies to improve outcomes for looked after children

We recognise a number of strategies that will make a difference to the achievements of looked after children.

Providing stability and continuity of education.

- Every effort will be made to minimise the number of school changes for the looked after child, particularly towards the end of each key stage and during secondary school examination periods.
- **Ensuring that schools /carers have the information, support and resources they require.**
- Information, appropriate training and adequate resources will be made available to schools and carers.

Targeting the provision.

- Looked after children will be provided with additional support and have access to flexible and individual tailored activities and learning opportunities including one-to-one learning programmes, reading, writing and mathematics challenges, study skills and revision guides.
- **Providing access to Information Technology.**
- Looked after children of secondary school age will be provided with a laptop computer for their studies if appropriate.

Ensuring the effective use of data to track progress and challenge under performance.

- Effective systems will be established for the regular collection of data from schools to scrutinise the progress of looked after children and identify the actions required for the next steps in their learning.

Creating individual learning plans.

- Every looked after child will have a Personal Education Plan that includes actions and robust targets that can be easily monitored and measured, and will be regularly reviewed.

Encouraging good attendance.

- The attendance of all looked after children will be monitored by the Education Welfare Service who will work closely with schools, the virtual school education team, carers and social workers.

Celebrating and encouraging success.

- Every possible opportunity will be taken with the local media to publicise the achievements of children looked after by Wokingham will also organise an annual awards ceremony to celebrate the achievements of looked after children as well as recognising the support of their carers and schools.

Listening to the views of LAC

- The Children in Care Council is the principal mechanism for the Local Authority to be responsive and informed by the voice and needs of looked after children.

Providing individual guidance and support.

- All schools, from pre-school to the end of statutory school age, will provide a designated teacher and governor for looked after children. A personal adviser will be provided from the Commissioned Information and Guidance Service for all young people post 16.

GUIDANCE FOR PUPIL PREMIUM AND PUPIL EDUCATION ALLOWANCES

Pupil Premium

The pupil premium is a grant for looked after children from central government that is distributed via local authorities directly to schools. The grant of £2345 per child is paid in three instalments at the beginning of each term.

The conditions of the grant are as follows:

- The child must be of statutory school age.
- The child must be continuously looked after for a minimum period of six months.
- The spending must be identified and recorded on the PEP.
- The Pupil Premium must have a direct impact on the child.
- The grant can be spent over two financial years

Funding for looked-after children

Virtual school heads are responsible for managing the funding given to local authorities for the children in their care. They work with schools to ensure the funding is used to help deliver the outcomes identified in the children's personal education plans, in line with the menu of approaches.

They can pass all the funding on to schools or retain some to fund activities that will benefit a group, or all, of the local authority's looked-after children.

For a Previously Looked after Child (PLAC) the funding can be used for group interventions including the PLAC. The school has the autonomy as to how you use PLAC funding (PP+) assuming in doing so it raises the achievement of the PLAC.

All schools and alternative education providers who have looked after children on roll will receive the grant from the responsible local authority.

Pupil Education Allowances

Pupil Education Allowances are additional resources provided by local authorities. Some local authorities have withdrawn these allowances since the introduction of the Pupil Premium. This is not the case in Wokingham.

Up to £500 in any one financial year can be awarded to a child looked after by Wokingham. The purpose of the funding is to provide additional, personalised support for a child who is at risk of falling behind his/her peers in their education. The funding can also be used to enhance the learning and personal development of a looked after child.

The award of a Pupil Education Allowance should be agreed at the PEP review meeting and recorded on the PEP. At the subsequent PEP meeting, the impact of the funding must be evaluated.

Activities supported by PEAs can include:

- Additional 1 to 1 tuition to support learning.
- Out of hours learning to build self-esteem and confidence.
- Personalised educational visit not organised by the school as part of the curriculum.
- Music lessons(Children who attend schools in Berkshire are entitled to free music tuition and instruments with Berkshire Maestros)
- Learning resources not covered by fostering allowances or children's homes fees.
- Additional support for vocational training.

PEA funding **cannot** support:

Any support set out in a statement of SEN or needs at school action or school action plus.

Resources that the local authority provides through foster carers allowances or children's home fees.

- Visits organised by the school and are part of the curriculum.
- Basic school equipment e.g.-uniform, PE kit, stationery.
- Laptop computers (all Wokingham LAC of secondary school age pupils receive a laptop from another funding stream)
- Alternative education provision for pupils who are subject to a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

MODEL SCHOOL POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

We recognise that nationally, children in public care have significantly underachieved compared to their peers.

The Governing Body of Walter Infant School and Nursery is committed to promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement of all LAC.

We acknowledge and will work to promote the following six principles:

1. Prioritising education
2. Having high expectations
3. Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
4. Achieving stability and continuity
5. Early intervention and priority
6. Listening to children

The Governing Body will ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that the Designated Teacher is able to carry out his /her responsibilities effectively.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DCSF Statutory Guidance 2009) states that the Designated Teacher should be 'someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, (who) should be an advocate for the young people in public care, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.'

Our Designated Teacher will :

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their 'carer.'
- Ensure that every LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.
- Ensure that staff are informed on a need to know basis of all relevant information about the child.
- Co-ordinate any support that is necessary within the school.
- Encourage LAC to join in extra- curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Ensure that every member of staff in school reviews receives relevant training, and act as an adviser to staff and to governors.
- Set up urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the child changes school, to the new school.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of all LAC in the school.
- Ensure that all LAC are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a child's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.

- Respond promptly to the Designated Teachers requests for information.
- Work to enable all LAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self- esteem of all LAC, maintain confidentiality and ensure that no LAC is stigmatised in any way.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his / her responsibilities.
- Support everyone with responsibility for LAC in the school in ensuring that the needs of these children are recognised and met.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for the education of LAC.
- Nominate a Governor to take special interest in this area of the schools work.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOMINATED GOVERNOR

The nominated Governor will liaise with the Designated Teacher and report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of looked after children on the school roll.
- Their attendance as a discreet group, compared to other students.
- Their end of key stage and predicted scores as a discreet group compared to other students.
- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- The destinations of students who leave the school.

The information for this report will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the students concerned.

The nominated Governor will also ensure that the schools other policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:

- Admission to school – LAC are in the highest category for admission
- The National Curriculum and public examinations.
- Additional educational support where this is needed.
- In conjunction with the child's social worker and the local authority Head teacher for looked after children, ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed within **10 working days** of the child joining the school.
- In conjunction with the social worker and the Head teacher for looked after children, ensure that the personal education plan is regularly reviewed each term.
- The National Curriculum and public examinations
- Additional educational support where this is needed
- Extra curricular activities
- Work experience and careers guidance.

TRAINING

The Head teacher / Designated Teacher /CPD Leader will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy and other relevant policies.

