Tenbury Primary Academy Policy for the Inclusive Education of Looked After Children

‘Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.’

Thessalonians 5:11

We believe that all looked after children should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and be able to achieve at a similar level to all Worcestershire children.

We recognise that nationally there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers.

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for looked after children by ensuring that:

Advocacy

- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'looked after' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and/or behaviour, due consideration will be given
- Designated Teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Headteacher
- School staff and governors are aware and adhere to of the DfE statutory guidance: Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children (2014)
- There is a dedicated and trained Governor to monitor the work of the school in supporting its looked after children as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children

Documentation and Monitoring of Progress

- We contribute to the process whereby all looked after children have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 20 days of starting at our school or becoming looked after. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (Student profile, IEP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan.)
- PEP targets will reflect the outcomes everyone, most importantly the child, aspires to. These will determine the need for pupil premium plus for the child or young person. Personalised, specific and meets individual child's needs. Adapted frequently as the pupil develops over each term.
- PP+ Funding is used to improve educational outcomes for our Looked After Children. Interventions will be tailored to the characteristics and experiences of the individual, ensuring the young person makes at least good or excellent progress.
- The young person's views will be sought by the Designated Teacher, in a way that best promotes the child's engagement and noted on the PEP.
- If appropriate the young person will attend the PEP and contribute. Some young people chair their own PEPs and it is always good practice to have a 'pre-meeting' where we can talk through who will be there, what to expect and most importantly find out if they have any concerns, anxieties or anything they would like us to help them raise.
- Following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that, the young person has the opportunity to achieve his or her targets.
- The school will assess each young person's attainment either on entry to the school or on becoming looked after to ensure continuity of learning. These baselines will be recorded in the PEP. We will not, however, use these to refuse admission to the school.
- The school will meet VS deadlines for submission of attainment and progress data.
- The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals and report this to the Virtual School at Worcestershire, on a termly basis or other home authorities where appropriate. Where a child is underachieving, an interim PEP review to discuss how this underachievement will be addressed.
- Where children transfer from a different authority eg. Shropshire, Birmingham or Herefordshire, we will work closely with and follow all protocols of the relevant Virtual School for those children.
- The school will be proactive to discuss the progress of LAC, where there are causes of concern, with members of the wide VS network.

- The school will be proactive in sharing effective practice, where LAC are making noticeable and/or significant progress.

The Designated Teacher will know all the Looked After Children in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. We will ensure all Looked After Children's progress is celebrated. The Designated Teacher will also know about any Looked After Children from other authorities. The Designated Teacher will inform all appropriate members of staff who LAC are to ensure appropriate support and challenge.

It is important that the school flags Looked After Children status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Joined Up Working (for all schools, the Virtual School)

- We will send representatives to any review held for the child where appropriate.
- We will send reports to any review held for the child.
- Schools will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition. The Virtual School will assist and will ensure any additional information is also forwarded.
- We take a proactive approach in co-operating with and supporting the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of our looked after children.
- We liaise with other agencies as appropriate so that each looked after child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- At school, we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and caseworkers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their full potential.
- We ensure that Virtual School, carers and social workers are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment. Information between staff and other relevant professionals is on a need to know basis only and in line with Confidentiality and Data Sharing Protocols.

Training

- We will attend training arranged or recommended by the Local Authority regarding the roles and responsibilities involved in the education of looked after children.
- The Headteacher, Designated Teacher and / or Inclusion Officer will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Governance

- We have a trained governor designated to lead on children in care and other vulnerable groups.
- We ensure that the designated teachers report at least once a year to governors on the training they have received, the safety of children in care and their attainment and progress.
- Governors have good knowledge of the impact of the pupil premium for looked after children and challenge leaders.

Admissions

- The Governing Body adheres to the Admissions Code (2021) and Local Authority protocol for the Admission of Looked After Children. Looked After Children will not be expected to be placed via the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol.
- Due to care placement changes, we understand that Looked After Children may require a school placement mid-year. We will ensure that they receive the best possible start within our school and will endeavour to offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle in.
- Where an application is received for a place for an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, the school will give due attention to the agreed protocol ensuring that these vulnerable young people are swiftly admitted and integrated in to school.
- We will only refuse the admission of a Looked After Child if we feel that we are unable to meet the child's needs and that such admission would cause prejudice. We therefore expect professionals to have followed the Local Authority's Admissions Protocol for Looked After Children prior to making an application to the school.

Inclusion

- This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced and broadly based curriculum.
- Our Looked After Children policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive.
- The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Looked After Children pupils.
- We encourage each looked after child to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self–esteem and learning.
- In the few instances where we review whether a child is still appropriately placed in a school we will arrange an interim review of the PEP to:
    - discuss the current provision, any adaptations, required or proposed alternative arrangements The persons involved in the PEP will be consulted at all times
    - We will only exclude a child if we have evidence that supports the decision to Permanently Exclude in line with statutory guidance.

In any case where we have concerns, having regard particular regard to our Behaviour, Attendance and Attainment Policies, regarding a Looked After Child we will arrange an immediate review of the PEP.

Looked After Children Policy Review and Evaluation

- We consider the Looked After Children policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan

Date: September 2026 **Review date:** September 2027

Roles and Responsibilities

Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers.

For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework

This may result in:

1. Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
2. Underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people and children under Special Guardianship Order.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. To date the outcomes achieved by Looked After Children have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

1. Giving priority to education
2. Listening to children
3. Providing stability and continuity
4. Taking corporate responsibility
5. Promoting inclusion
6. Raising standards
7. Intervening early
8. Promoting early years experiences
9. Celebrating success

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children within school
- Ensure the pupil premium is used effectively to ensure looked after children make progress, especially in English and Maths
- Be familiar with the statutory guidance on the role of the designated teacher
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Looked After Children on both the Looked After Children and the rest of the school community
- Know all the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about Looked After Children
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice from the Virtual School Team when appropriate
- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle into school life.
- Ensure that all Looked After Children have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care (see guidance on PEPs) and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Ensure that all data on Looked After Children is made available for meetings between the Headteacher, governors and the school improvement partner (if allocated)

- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at termly intervals
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for Looked After Children
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Children transfers to another educational placement
- Contribute information to Looked After Children reviews when required
- Report to the Governing body on Looked After Children in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- Prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
    - The number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
    - Their attendance compared to other pupils
    - Their attainment & progress compared to other pupils
    - Impact of PP+ & spend to improve educational outcomes
    - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
    - The destinations of pupils who leave the school

- Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children
- Arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk to and meet on a regular basis to discuss any concerns, worries or successes.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEND. Looked After Children are six to eight times more likely to have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), than the general school population

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- Follow school procedures
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Children's progress
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC
- Positively promote the raising of a Looked After Children's self esteem
- Ensure any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties
- Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful of the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- Liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:

  Admission to school
  - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
  - out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
  - Work experience and careers guidance

- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings for Looked After Children

The Local Authority & Worcestershire Children First will:

- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Looked After Children
- Ensure that the education provision for this group is as good as that provided for every other Worcestershire pupil
- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every Looked After Child has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Worcestershire from another authority
- Make sure that each Looked After Child has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs