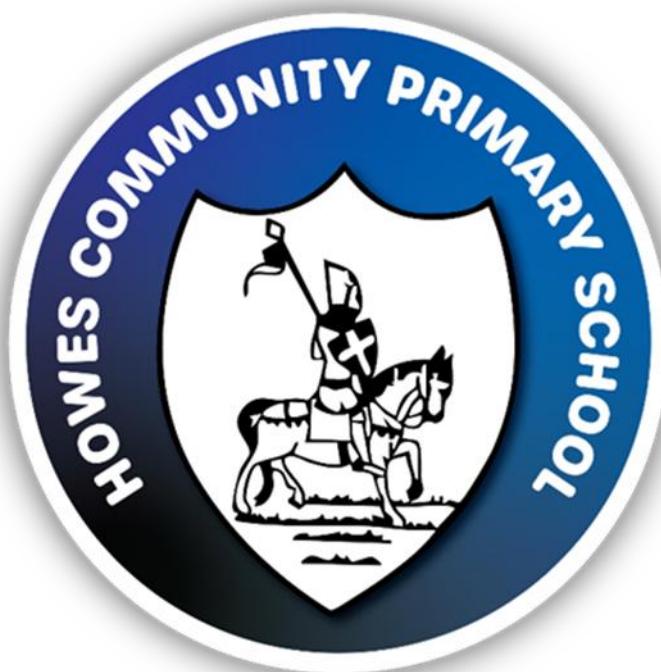


Howes Community Primary School



Looked After Children Policy

November 2025

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1 Introduction

Howes Community Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. We recognise that an educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes, and well-being of every young person matter. At Howes Community Primary School, this is evident in our ethos and readiness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. We are aware that Looked After Children constitutes a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taken into care, but that they are also individuals and members of other groups. We will take this into account when planning to meet their needs, treating all pupils as individuals, and making reasonable adjustments to account for pupils' varied life experiences.

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We believe that Howes Community Primary School has a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are exceptionally well prepared for the next steps in their lives. We aim to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful, enthusiastic learners and responsible individuals by providing a positive, safe and stimulating environment where all are included, and achievements are celebrated. We are committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Guidance on the Education of Looked After Children" (May 2000) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally defined as "looked after" if they are in the care of the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

Looked After Children (LAC) are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents or respite care.

Children can be “looked after” by the local authority under the following categories:

1.1 Accommodated (Section 20)

Section 20 is used to accommodate children who are unable to live with their parents. There is no time limit however they should not be used as a long-term solution. Parents retain parental responsibility.

Children’s services have a duty to accommodate under section 20 if:

- No-one has Parental Responsibility for the young person or
- The young person is lost or abandoned or
- The person who has been caring for the young person is unable to continue to provide suitable care and accommodation.

1.2 In Care (Interim or Full Care Order)

A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority or shares this with the parents.

Children who are looked after may be living:

- with foster parents;
- at home with their parents under the supervision of Children’s Social Care;
- in a residential children’s home
- with extended family members (known as kinship placements);
- with friends of the family or other ‘connected persons’

1.3 Previously - Looked After Children (PLAC)

Previously - Looked After Children (PLAC) are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

2 Aim

Looked After Children may face the following:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues
- poor attachments to others
- have a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. Therefore, the aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 LAC Designated Teacher (DT)

The DT must be a qualified teacher or a member of staff with appropriate experience. Ideally, the DT should be a senior member of staff with sufficient authority to:

- Influence whole-school decisions on teaching and learning.
- Advise and train colleagues on the specific needs of LAC.
- Lead on strategic planning and interventions for LAC.

The Designated Teacher (DT) plays a vital role in ensuring that Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) receive the support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The DT is a key advocate for these pupils and works closely with school staff, carers, external agencies, and the Virtual School. Core Responsibilities include:

- **Identification and Record-Keeping**
 - Maintain an up-to-date register of all LAC and PLAC in school.
 - Ensure relevant information is accessible via school systems and shared appropriately.
- **Training and Liaison**

- Attend training provided by the Local Authority and Virtual School.
- Act as the main point of contact for carers, social workers, and other professionals.
- **Promoting High Expectations**
 - Foster a culture of ambition and high achievement for LAC.
 - Support staff in understanding the barriers LAC may face and how to overcome them.
- **Teaching and Learning**
 - Advise on effective, differentiated teaching strategies.
 - Ensure LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and targeted interventions.
 - Support the development of personalised learning plans.
- **Transition and Induction**
 - Ensure smooth transitions for LAC joining or leaving the school.
 - Carry out initial assessments to inform planning and support.
- **Pupil Voice and Advocacy**
 - Encourage LAC to contribute to their learning targets.
 - Promote participation in extra-curricular and enrichment activities.
- **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**
 - Lead on the development and implementation of PEPs.
 - Monitor progress against PEP targets and update as needed.
 - Collaborate with the Virtual School and social workers to ensure PEPs are effective.
- **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)**
 - Work with the Virtual School to allocate PP+ funding for LAC.
 - Manage PP+ for PLAC to support academic and personal development.
- **Multi-Agency Support**
 - Convene urgent meetings if a LAC is at risk of exclusion or facing significant challenges.
 - Arrange mentoring or peer support where appropriate.
- **Monitoring and Reporting**
 - Provide an annual report to the governing body covering:
 - Academic progress, attendance, exclusions
 - Behaviour concerns and interventions
 - PEP effectiveness and partnership working
 - Training undertaken and impact on practice
- **Behaviour and Inclusion**
 - Ensure the school's Behaviour Policy considers the needs of LAC and PLAC.

- Inform the Virtual School early if behaviour concerns arise and seek additional support.
- Promote inclusive practices and avoid exclusion unless absolutely necessary.
- **Home-School Links**
 - Strengthen relationships with carers and promote the value of education.
 - Encourage learning at home and celebrate achievements.

3.2 The Head Teacher

The overall responsibility for the educational progress and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Headteacher. Working in partnership with the Designated Teacher, the Headteacher ensures that inclusive strategies are in place and that all staff are equipped to implement them effectively. The Headteacher will support the Designated Teacher in fulfilling their statutory duties, ensure that the Designated Teacher has the time, resources, and professional development opportunities needed to carry out the role effectively and promote a whole-school culture that recognises and responds to the needs of LAC and PLAC.

3.3 All Staff

At Howes Community Primary School, all staff share a collective duty of care towards every child. With specific regard to Looked After Children (LAC), staff are expected to:

- Provide sensitive support and maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and other documentation required for review meetings.
- Be available as a trusted adult if a LAC requests a named person to talk to.
- Contribute relevant information to the Designated Teacher regarding the child's educational progress and needs.
- Avoid any form of stigmatisation, ensuring LAC are treated with dignity and respect, just like all other pupils.
- Create a supportive and stable school environment that helps LAC feel safe and included.
- Maintain high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC.

- Promote self-esteem and confidence, recognising and celebrating each child's strengths and successes.

Staff play a vital role in ensuring that Looked After Children feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

3.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body plays a key role in ensuring that the school meets its statutory duties and provides effective support for Looked After Children (LAC). Governors will:

- Ensure all members of the Governing Body are familiar with the legal requirements and statutory guidance relating to LAC.
- Be aware of whether the school currently has any LAC on roll and how many (without identifying individual pupils).
- Ensure that a named Designated Teacher is appointed and that they have the capacity and authority to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure the Designated Teacher is supported and enabled to carry out their role effectively.
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher, and wider staff team in meeting the needs of LAC.
- Nominate a link governor for LAC who:
 - Maintains regular contact with the Designated Teacher.
 - Receives progress updates (excluding any personal identifiers).
 - Reports to the full Governing Body on the effectiveness of provision.
- Review the implementation and impact of the Looked After Children Policy annually, ensuring it remains fit for purpose and reflects current guidance.

4 Confidentiality and Information Sharing.

The Designated Teacher will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan if in place. If there is no current PEP, the Inclusion manager will liaise with the Social Worker and Virtual School to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.

Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no arrangements are in place, only staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Designated Teacher of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties.

The Designated Teacher will talk to the children about the information to be recorded about their personal circumstances and make it clear that this is to help all the people involved in their lives work together to help them in school. The nature of this conversation will depend upon the age and level of understanding of the child.

Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:

- termly assessment
- termly reports

5 Curriculum

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The Designated Teacher will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff.
- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties.
- Talk to the child.
- Implement support from the SEN/pastoral team to support learning.
- Additional strategies may include: use of initiatives and interventions, liaison with the Virtual School and other specialist services, contact with social workers and carers

We recognise that there are factors which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as high as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that under-achievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked.

We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark Mother's Day or to investigate family history, may cause

difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively.

6 Attendance

Information about the attendance of Looked After Children will be collected as follows: Regular meetings with the Attendance team at the Local Authority. This information will be analysed by the Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children whose attendance is poor so early intervention can take place.

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality

- The social worker and carers will be contacted by the Designated Teacher to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- We will continue to work with the Local Authority Attendance Team who will be involved fully in planning and delivering strategies to improve attendance

7 Behaviour

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage:

- The Designated Teacher will contact the social worker, carers and Virtual School as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the child's behaviour.
- If the concern continues, the Social Worker, carers, and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, SEMHL, the Virtual School will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the behaviours.
- We recognise that Looked After Children are far more likely to be excluded. Any exclusion will be carefully considered by the Designated Teacher and Headteacher and only issued when there is no alternative. All exclusions will be confirmed in writing and copies will be sent to carers, social worker and Virtual School.
- Information about the behaviour of Looked After Children will be collected as follows:
 - CPOMS – following school policy and procedure
 - The school's main incident log- kept by the Headteacher

- Discussions with the class teacher
- Records of incidents recorded in Individual files.

All information will be analysed by Designated Teacher to identify individuals or groups of Looked After Children who are at increased risk of exclusion so early intervention can take place.

8 Homework

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete homework, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so.

9 Extra-Curricular Activities

We believe it is essential that Looked After Children can play a full part in school life, the following strategies are in place to help them to do this:

- The Designated Teacher will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities on a termly basis.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with the young person, carers and social workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- The Designated Teacher will liaise with LA support services such as the Virtual School to develop strategies for increasing the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities if their uptake is shown to be low.

The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiatives will be monitored and evaluated by:

- The collection and analysis of information
- Discussion with school staff, carers, social workers and staff from LA Support Services, both informally and during meetings.
- Discussions with Looked After Children

10 Evaluation

The general success and appropriateness of this policy will be evaluated every two years. In addition, we will monitor and analyse the impact of this policy on pupils, staff and parents of different ethnic groups. The results of the evaluation will be passed to the school Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children before being presented to the Governing Body.

To be reviewed: November 2027