



DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT

Looked After Children Policy

November 2020

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Our commitment

The governing body of Durants School is committed to providing a quality education experience for all our pupils. It recognises that, nationally, pupils in care have significantly under achieved compared to their peers. Through this policy, we intend to promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement of looked after pupils in our school.

Whatever the background or circumstances of children in this school, we aim to support pupils to:

Be healthy

Stay safe

Enjoy and achieve

Make a positive contribution

Achieve economic well-being

The governing body of this school takes its corporate parenting responsibilities very seriously. We will consider the needs of looked after children at the planning and policy level right through to monitoring and evaluation in every area of school life. We will ensure that the head teacher and the designated teacher have sufficient support and resources to carry out their responsibilities in respect of looked after pupils. And we will make sure that all governors and teachers are fully aware of the legal requirements and national and local guidance on the education of children in care.

In line with national guidance on how to improve the attainment of looked after children in schools, our school commits to supporting our looked after children by:

Doing the things we do for all children but more so.

Balancing high levels of support with real challenge.

Linking each child to a key person they relate well to.

Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships with them.

Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies to put the support in place they need.

Making things happen for them and seeing things through.

Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility in the support we offer them.

Actively extending the horizons of each child.

Planning for future transitions

Supporting the Designated Teacher

The governing body will nominate a designated teacher for Looked After Children who will promote the educational achievement, act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them. The governing body will support the designated teacher in their leadership role in the school.

The designated teacher's responsibility is to help school staff to understand the things that can affect how looked after children learn and achieve and to champion the attainment of individual looked after children. Some examples of their role include:

Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies to make sure they do not put looked after children at a disadvantage.

Making sure that there are effective and well-understood procedures in place to support individual looked after children's learning.

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Promoting a culture in which looked after children believe they can achieve highly and feel they can discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets.

Being a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual looked after children.

Maintaining an overview of the needs and progress of looked after pupils, including making sure the schools makes full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked after children.

Co-ordinating and advocating for any additional support and making sure looked after children are prioritised when selecting pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition.

Working closely with Special Educational Needs staff to ensure early assessment if a pupil is experiencing difficulties, and arranging urgent meetings if he/she is at risk of exclusion.

Promoting good home-school links with the child's carer about how they can support his/her progress.

Having lead responsibility for development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the school, in partnership with others.

Being or helping identify someone in the school to act as a key contact for each looked after child/young person, who they trust and can talk to. This need not be the designated teacher, or indeed a member of teaching staff at all, but should take account of the wishes of the child.

Helping looked after pupils to make the right examination choices for their abilities, aspirations and interests and making sure they have the support they need to do as well as possible in the exams.

Contributing to decisions relating to the use of Personal Education Allowances (PEAs), allocated by the local authority to pupils who are identified as falling behind their peers.

Monitoring attendance of looked after pupils

Ensuring confidentiality for pupils, sharing personal information only on a need-to-know basis.

The designated teacher's responsibilities begin with the admission of the pupil to school, when the teacher will ensure that the child and carer are welcomed and that a smooth induction is achieved, especially if admission is other than at normal admission times (i.e. Not at normal admission years or at the beginning of the academic year, when settling into school might be more difficult.).

The designated teacher will be supported by the Headteacher. Designated teachers and Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All looked after children must have a care plan in place. It looks at objectives for the child and identifies what support they need. This must include a health plan and a PEP. The designated teacher has responsibility for working with the local authority to create and maintain the PEP.

The Role of the Governing Body

We will make sure we have a suitable designated teacher for looked after pupils in place and will and consider reports from them every term.

We will also:

- Make sure the designated teacher is a member of teaching staff with the right levels of seniority, experience and status to provide leadership, training and advice to others.

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- Work with the head teacher to make sure the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to respond to the teaching and learning needs of looked after children.
- Maintain an oversight of how well the role is working. We will consider whether the school has a clear understanding of the educational needs and progress of looked after children on our roll, whether the school's policies effectively reflect the needs of looked after children and whether resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out their role effectively.
- Receive report every term from the designated teacher. This should highlight:
 - Any workload issues arising as a result of the number of children looked after on the role.
 - Levels of progress made by looked after children in relation to all children (including educational, social and emotional progress).
 - Whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked after children is different to that of all children.
 - Any process or planning issues arising from Personal Education Plans.
 - Whether any looked after children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met.
 - How their special educational needs (SEN) are being met.
 - How the teaching and learning needs of looked after children are reflected in school development plans and are being met.
 - What training the designated teacher has had to enable them to impart knowledge and understanding about the education and well-being of looked after children to other staff.
 - What work with partners such as the local authority has taken place.
 - The impact of any of the school's policies (e.g. on charging for educational visits or extended school activity) on looked after children.
 - The report will not mention children by name, to protect their confidentiality.
 - Consider this report and what needs to be done to respond to any issues raised in the report.
- We will also ensure that all staff are made aware of the additional needs of looked after pupils, and are given some understanding of the reasons that children and young people are taken into the care of the local authority. Given sufficient understanding and support, every member of staff will be encouraged to:
 - Have high expectations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after pupils
 - Ensure that all pupils in care are supported sensitively, respecting confidentiality and responding positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff
 - Respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information
 - Promote the self-esteem and success of looked after pupils and work towards increased stability for them, ensuring that no child in care is stigmatised in any way.
- The governing body will make sure all governors maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of looked after children's needs, through commitment to induction and ongoing training as necessary.

The governors will appoint a Nominated Governor for looked after pupils to take a special interest in this area of the school's work.

The role of the Nominated Governor

The nominated Governor will fulfil a reporting role within the governing body, liaising with the designated teacher to secure information regarding the number of looked after pupils in school (if any) and statistical information relating to their attendance, attainment and fixed term and permanent exclusions. They will make sure the governing body receives the regular reports on the attainment and wellbeing of these children. This information and any other details about pupils will be collected and reported in ways that preserve anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

The Nominated Governor will also ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after pupils' appropriate priority in respect of:

- Admission to school
- National Curriculum entitlement and entry to public examinations
- Stringent target setting
- Additional educational support where appropriate, including Personal Education Allowances
- Extra curricular activities
- Work experience and careers guidance

The Nominated Governor will commit to attending training to keep their knowledge and understanding up-to-date, to identifying the training needs of the governing body in relation to looked after children and to encouraging attendance on training programmes.

Related Policies

This policy links with other school policies, particularly:

- Admissions Policy (see appendix 4)
- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Race Equality Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

Professional Development/Training for all Staff

The head teacher/designated teacher/staff development officer (delete as appropriate) will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy

Appendix 1

Sources and References

- Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care (DfES/DoH, 2000)
www.dfes.gov.uk/educationprotects/
- Every Child Matters: Change for Children (HM Government 2004)
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications

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- Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (DfES, Nov 2005) www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications
- Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors (DfES, 2006)
- <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/1929-2005PDF-EN-01.pdf>
- Children and Young Person’s Act 2008.
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080023_en_1
- Schools Admissions Code of Practice (DCSF 2009)
- <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode/downloads/SchoolAdmissionsCodeWEB060309.pdf>
- Looked after children – good practice in schools OfSTED, 2008
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Care/Local-services/Looked-after-children-good-practice-in-schools>
- Taking Part: Making Out of School Hours Learning Happen for Children in Care ContinYou, 2005 http://www.continyou.org.uk/resources_and_publications/free/resource/taking_part
- Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units DCSF 2008,
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/exclusion/2008guidance/>
- Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children)
- DCSF 2009
- <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-00523-2009.pdf>
- Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in primary schools DCSF 2009
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01047-2009.pdf>
- Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in secondary schools
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01048-2009.pdf> DCSF 2009
- The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children: statutory guidance for school governing bodies
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01046-2009.pdf>

Useful Websites:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/>
www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk/

Appendix 2

Checklist of questions for governors Planning

- How will the school include raising the attainment of looked after children in the school improvement plan?
- What policies has the school developed that encourage collaboration with other agencies and services e.g. health professionals, CAMHS, school attendance services?
- What is the policy on professional development for all staff in contact with vulnerable children?
- How does the school assist local authorities with requests to provide data on attendance, attainment and exclusions?

Raising staff awareness

What safeguards does the school have in place for sharing sensitive information about individual looked after children with relevant staff members?

What is the procedure for liaising with carers/residential children's homes and social services to ensure that the school has relevant information about a child's care history?

How are the child's achievements communicated to the carer?

Admissions

How are applications handled after the normal admission round?

What are the arrangements for welcoming new (looked after) pupils and do they take into account that looked after children (perhaps arriving mid-term) may have additional support needs?

What does the school do to ensure that new admissions are well supported by their peers?

How does the school provide information to carers and social workers about the school's admission and appeal process?

Who liaises with other agencies to ensure that an education placement works?

Record keeping and transfer

Who reviews and keeps the child's PEP up-to-date?

Who updates school records with current addresses of carers, birth parents, social worker, etc?

What is the procedure to prepare information for transfer if a looked after child changes school?

Promoting inclusive schooling and good home-school communication

How does the school record who is entitled to a child's report, receives invitation to parents' evenings and other school events?

Are carers given a named person, such as the designated teacher, to contact if they have concerns?

Are carers asked to sign the home school agreement even when their child may be placed temporarily in the school?

What steps have been taken to ensure that carers have understood and signed the home school agreement?

Does the school charging policy need to be changed to ensure better take-up of trips among groups of children, such as those who are looked after?

Are a range of study support and out-of-school opportunities such as homework clubs, careers guidance and work experience available to looked after children even if they join school mid-year?

Promoting inclusive schooling: curriculum and options

Have the needs of looked after children been considered in the context of the school's curriculum policy?

What is the process when making a decision to place a young person on an alternative curriculum at KS4? Does the school always consult relevant professionals, the young person and his or her carers?

Is flexible personalised learning available to looked after children?

Does the school have a good baseline of information – informed by transfer of school records and thorough assessments – so that barriers to learning are quickly identified and actions are put in place to secure each pupil's progress?

Is the school timetable flexible with regard to outside fixed activities?

Promoting high expectations and achievement

What targets are there for looked after children in the school?
Does the school include measures of individual children’s progress?
What are the specific barriers to achievement facing looked after children and can the school take action to remove them?
Is there good liaison with foster carers and children’s homes to support children’s learning?
If looked after children get behind, how is this identified and help provided?
How does the school celebrate the educational successes of looked after children?
Would regular access to a learning mentor help vulnerable children succeed?
What revision support is available for examinations for children at risk of underachieving? How are looked after children encouraged and supported to attend these?
How are looked after children encouraged and supported to access taster activities for further and higher education?
Are looked after children engaged in the gifted and talented programme?

SEN

How does the school ensure prompt identification of special educational needs of looked after children?

Are carers informed that the child has special educational needs and that they can get help from the Parent Partnership Service?

How are carers/social workers involved in assessments and reviews?

How are young people involved in reviews and target setting?

Is the level of support given to looked after children with special educational needs sufficient considering their status?

Are there particular staff training needs in connection with meeting the needs of looked after children?

Exclusions

When considering exclusion, does the head teacher and the governing body have regard to the Secretary of State’s guidance on exclusion, Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from School and Pupil Referral Units?

Is there any trend in exclusion rates of looked after children?

What strategies does the school use to avoid exclusion of vulnerable children including looked after children?

Is the appeal process fully explained to social workers and foster carers when a looked after child is excluded?

Are young people in care encouraged to attend governors’ hearings which are reviewing their exclusion?

Does the head teacher’s letter of exclusion always signpost carers to the ACE exclusion helpline?

Has the appropriate person/team in the local authority with responsibility for children missing education been notified of the child's exclusion?

Does the school take vulnerable children, such as looked after children, excluded from other schools?

What are the reintegration arrangements for looked after children who have been excluded?

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What other agencies are working with the child and have they delivered the necessary support e.g. clinical psychology/CAMHS?

Where a looked after child is at risk of exclusion does his or her PEP include pastoral support provision?

Promoting health

Are the needs of looked after children considered in health-promoting schemes such as cycling to school; cycling proficiency training; 'walking buses' (pupils collected from an agreed location and then walk together to school escorted in safe groups by volunteers, with other pupils joining them en route); study support and out of school hours activities?

Do the citizenship and PSHE curricula take full account of including children whose experiences and understanding of 'family' may be different?

Pastoral support

What targeted interventions can the school initiate that focus on groups of children who have known risk factors, such as being in care?

How does the school behaviour policy pre-empt escalating behaviour problems?

How does the school ensure that initiatives such as lunchtime clubs and anti-bullying work include specific vulnerable groups such as looked after children?

Does the school have procedures for contacting relevant professional help for specific problems, e.g. local authority Behavioural Support Team, CAMHS, educational psychologist?

Are carers contacted on the first day of any unexplained absence?

Is the governing body aware of additional funding streams?

Are carers aware of the school's anti-bullying policies?

Study support

Could the study support programme be more flexible to cater for the needs of looked after children?

Does the school regularly consult with carers and looked after children about study support activities?

Is the school in contact with the local authority study support co-ordinator to discuss ideas? Is one-to-one tuition provided for every looked after child?

Appendix 3

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) **

In addition to the usual school records, every looked after child must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP).

The PEP is an integral part of the Care Plan and the Social Worker should take the lead to ensure that a high quality PEP is available for the first statutory review meeting of the Care Plan (the 28

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day review). Where the child is placed in an emergency, the PEP should be initiated within 14 days of his/her becoming looked after, wherever he/she is placed.

It is a record of what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to fulfil their potential and it reflects any existing education plans such as a Statement of Special Educational Needs and/or an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The PEP should include details of who will take the plan forward, specifying timescales for action and review and identifying sources of funding if required.

Effective and high quality PEPs should:

be an achievement record (academic and otherwise);

be linked to information in other education plans, Education Health & Care Plan EHCP's and IEPs;

identify developmental and educational needs (short and long term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;

set short term targets, including progress monitoring against each of the areas identified against development and educational needs;

Set long term plans and educational targets and aspirations (e.g. in relation to public examinations, further and higher education, work experience and career plans and aspirations).

**Source: Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (DfES, Nov 2005)

Appendix 4 Admissions

Since September 2007, schools and local authorities have been expected, Under Section 1-6 of the Education Act 2005, to give top priority to looked after children when schools are oversubscribed.

If the governing body is the admissions authority for the school, it has a statutory responsibility to ensure that this is made clear in the admissions policy and is upheld during the allocation of school places.

Faith Schools are encouraged to give looked after children priority, regardless of faith, over all other children.

The Government expects all schools, academies, local authorities and Admissions Forums to agree and support a local protocol for the admission of pupils other than at normal admissions times. In some cases this may mean admitting pupils above standard number.

Glossary of Terms:

PEP	Personal Education Plan
IEP	Individual Education Plan
PEA	Personal Education Allowance
LAR	Looked After Review
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
EHCP	Education Health & Care Plan