

There are currently approximately 1350 children in care who are the responsibility of Lancashire Authority. Of these, around 900 are educated in Lancashire's schools. The Acorns School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Definition

The term 'looked after' was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child's welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full-time basis. Both these groups are said to be 'Children Looked After' (LAC) or 'children looked after' (CLA) or children in care by the local authority.

A private agreement is not public care - when a child lives with friends or relatives by private arrangement and these children are not designated as Looked After.

Aims

Staff at The Acorns School will aim to ensure that Children Looked After:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Be involved
- Make continual progress in education and personal wellbeing
- Acquire economic wellbeing to live independently as a confident adult

Rationale

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of children looked after, and tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning. The national outcomes for Children Looked After in terms of educational achievement and subsequent life chances are of real concern.

Schools can also provide a source of continuity and 'normality' for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of Children Looked After and schools play a pivotal role in this.

For Children Looked After, The Acorns School aims to provide positive experiences and to offer stability, safety, continuity, and individual care and attention.

ROLES AND PRIORITIES

The Headteacher and Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will ensure that the provision/outcomes for Children Looked After are specifically recorded in:

- The School Improvement Plan
- The SEF
- Appropriate School Policies and Procedures including Pupil Premium Grant initiatives
- Specific Reports on issues such as student progress in relation to targets and exam results; attendance; behaviour, sanctions, exclusions; student voice.

The Headteacher and Leadership team will also:

- Provide an annual report on the provision for, and progress of, Children Looked After to the Governing Body.
- Ensure staff are aware that the provision to support Children Looked After is a key school priority.
- Give the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After the time and facilities to carry out his / her job description and to support them at all times in their work.
- Show a personal interest and involvement in Children Looked After in the school.
- Challenge negative stereotypes of Children Looked After if they exist and to insist on the highest of expectations and especially in terms of Children Looked After achieving their full potential.
- Provide Continuing Professional Development for staff on issues pertaining to Children Looked After and to ensure that Designated Teachers attend regular training.
- Provide information to the School Advisor regarding the progress of Children Looked After on the school's roll.

Governing Body (Management Committee)

The Governing Body will appoint a Designated Person for Children Looked After.

The Governing Body will receive reports on Children Looked After as outlined above.

Designated Person

The Designated Person will

- Be a champion for Children Looked After within the school and ensure that they are receiving special provision.
- Ensure that the Children Looked After are aware of who the Designated Person is, and that the member of staff's role is to support them at school.
- Ensure that teachers who need to know are aware of who are Children Looked After, and ensure that the staff treat the information confidentially.
- Ensure that any issues regarding a child or young person being in care are treated sensitively by all staff.
- Ensure Children Looked After receive extra support as necessary and appropriate, with the key aims of helping them achieve their academic potential and further their personal and social development.

- Ensure that all possible is being done to raise the achievement levels of Children Looked After:
 - the students are following an appropriate curriculum (and in Year 9 make the best possible option choices);
 - the students know their targets and get feedback at least termly on how they are improving in relation to these targets and how they can improve and do better;
 - the school's data tracking shows on at least a termly basis if a student is underachieving with monitored intervention strategies then being put into place;
 - the students are entered for public exams in all cases unless it is totally inappropriate;
 - the students have access to any booster support that is available in the school;
 - the students have all possible individual assistance in developing their basic literacy, reading and numeracy skills;
 - students on the Special Educational Needs register receive all possible support to meet their needs;
 - able students have access to the school's Extended provision;
 - all possible support is given at times of transition.
 - students are completing homework and coursework on time and of good quality and that intervention takes place if this is not the case.
- To ensure that Children Looked After receive a smooth induction into the school, with the obtaining of all relevant past history.
- To keep comprehensive and up to date files on each student and to ensure that these are passed on should the student move school.
- To support the process for PEP and PEP reviews and to play the lead educational role at these PEP meetings.
- To check with staff on a continuous basis how the students are doing and to intervene quickly at the first sign of a problem, eg. behaviour issues, poor effort etc.
- To monitor attendance on a weekly basis.
- To draw up strategies for students who are not achieving, behaving poorly or not attending and then monitor the success of their implementation.
- To ensure that:
 - students undertake work experience and have access to enterprise and work-related education, including Aim Higher and link activities with further and higher education;
 - students receive all possible guidance and assistance in terms of their post 16 pathways, with the aim of ensuring that they progress to education, employment or training;
 - students are given specific help in developing the social and personal skills that will give them better life chances.
- To undertake periodic student voice exercises.
- To encourage students to be fully involved in extra curricular and extension activities both in and outside school; to help them with the logistics of taking part in school trips and other activities; to encourage them to be fully involved in the school, eg year and school councils.

- To ensure that students know there is someone they can approach if ever they have a problem or just want to talk, (this could be either the Designated Person or another member of staff).
- To make provision for specific mentoring or counselling as needed.
- To liaise with carers keeping them informed but also urging them to be partners in the student's education and showing them how they can do this.
- To ensure that students are getting their fair share of praise and rewards from the school's systems and to intervene when this seems not to be the case.
- To be vigilant for any child protection issues and also to check carefully for any sign of a Looked After Child being bullied.
- To ensure that the School Nurse is aware of the child's medical history and is liaising with the Children Looked After Health Support Team.
- To liaise closely with the Virtual School Team
 - contact the Virtual School Team if access is needed to a Social Worker or a multi-agency team;
 - informing the Virtual School Team of any problems out of school that seem to have been identified;
 - seeking the support of the Virtual School Team if LA or other agency procedures do not seem to be giving necessary support to Children Looked After;
 - keeping the Virtual School Team informed about the general progress of Children Looked After;
 - Informing the Virtual School Team if carers do not seem to be co-operating with the school in helping the student's educational development.

NB: The Virtual School Team will keep Designated Staff informed on all issues relating to their Children Looked After on a continuous and regular basis.

Teachers/Support Staff

To be aware of Children Looked After in their classes and to give them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision and positive discrimination whilst preserving confidentiality and showing sensitivity and understanding.

Senior Designated Person: Cathryn Woodhall

Designated Key worker: Sharon Murphy

Management Committee Designated Member: Bev Harrison