



**Designated teacher for LAC and previously
looked-after children Policy**

Status	Current Policy
Agreed by the Governing Board	December 2023
Review Cycle	Annually
Next Review	December 2024
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Lead Staff	Louvain Scott
Nominated Governor for LAC	Maria Blackburn
Chair of Governing Body	Alex Krutnik
Headteacher	Jane Hatwell

Mission Statement

We accept all students **as they are** and believe that every one of them is **entitled** to the very **best education**, delivered in an **environment** that is **supportive, caring** and **safe**.

Our goal is to develop our students to become:

- **Successful** Learners.
- As **independent** as possible.
- **Confident** individuals and self-advocates.
- **Effective** communicators and **contributors**.
- **Responsible** citizens.

We will do this by working to **ensure we get every aspect of their provision just right**, helping them to achieve academically, personally, socially and morally.

Rights Respecting Schools

The Unicef UK Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. The RRSA seeks to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential. A Rights Respecting School is a community where children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected, protected and promoted.

Stone Bay has achieved THE Bronze Award and is a Rights Committed school.

This policy is written with reference to;

Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously

Article 20 (children unable to live with their family) If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. T

Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Rationale

Nationally, children in care significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and of becoming NEET compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that children in care are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

Helping children in care to succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Kent County Council and Kent schools. This policy takes account of:

- The County Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children (LAC).
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children : Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked after Learners, A Practical Guide for School Governors).

Stone Bay School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children in Care is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

Aims

As for all our pupils, Stone Bay School is committed to helping every Child in Care to achieve their full potential, including supporting their aspirations for their lives when they leave school.

Definitions

Looked after children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of looked after children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that considerable educational underachievement exists when compared to their peers.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'In Care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the Court under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with Foster Carers, in a Children's Home, in a Residential School, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be 'Looked after Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Kent.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher will:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children in Care, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Children in Care and act where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children in Care
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher for Looked after Children at Stone Bay School is;

Lou Scott and Ivonne Puttmann - Assistant Head Teachers

The designated Teacher(s) will:

- Work in partnership with Kent Virtual School for looked after children and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that looked after children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.
- Ensure Stone Bay School assesses each looked after student's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The social worker for the looked after child initiates a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of the student joining the school, or of entering care, and ensures that the young person is actively involved.
- Following the initial PEP, liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP review meetings and provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, specialist teacher from VSK (Virtual School Kent or other Virtual School, where the child is from another Local Authority) and other agencies.
- Ensure allocation and purpose of the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) will be included within the PEP. All PEPs are completed electronically through online systems provided by the virtual school.
- Keep a record of all the looked after children in school and their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Virtual School specialist staff, teacher/support worker and social worker.
- Ensure the status of looked after children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available to all classroom teachers and relevant associate staff.
- Ensure LAC are identified as a vulnerable group when tracking, monitoring and reporting on attainment and progress.
- Undertake a review and evaluation of the impact of the looked after children policy and practice each year and report to the Governing Body.

The Governing Board

The Governing Body of Stone Bay School is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Identify a nominated Governor for Children in Care.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children in Care.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Procedures: the Governing Body will:
 - Monitor the academic progress of Children in Care, through an annual report
 - Ensure that Children in Care are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.

- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Children in Care achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children in Care are recognised and met.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We believe in developing strong partnerships with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Virtual School for Looked After Children (Looked After Children in Education Team)
- Other Virtual Schools for looked after children from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- External Learning Providers

Advice and support is available from Virtual School Kent:
<http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/>

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Children in care when reviewing them:

- Pupil Wellbeing Support Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy