Refugee and Asylum Seeker Policy

Agreed: September 2016

Signed: _____________ (HT)

Signed: _____________ (CofG)

Review Date: September 2017
Goldthorpe Primary School: Refugee and Asylum Seeker Policy

Aim

Goldthorpe Primary School comprehends that asylum-seeking and refugee children have equal education rights as other children resident in the UK.

Goldthorpe Primary School also recognises that unique challenges to the social, cultural and linguistic inclusion of asylum-seeking and refugee children are a product of the circumstances surrounding their arrival.

This policy summarises how our school will create a learning environment that will both meet these rights and address these challenges, ensuring that asylum-seeking and refugee children have the best possible opportunities to meet their academic potential.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy takes into account (but is not limited to) the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989.
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, s 117.

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following policies of the school:

- Admissions Policy.
- Free School Meals Policy.
- Looked After Children Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

2. Definitions

2.1. Asylum seekers are people who flee their home country and seek refugee status in another country, possibly due to war or other human rights abuses, and then lodge an application with the government.
2.2. Refugees are people recognised by the government as meeting the definition of refugee under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951.

3. Admissions
3.1. LAs have a legal duty to provide full-time education for all children of compulsory school age resident in their area, including asylum-seeking and refugee children.

3.2. Admissions staff are aware of the entitlements to education of asylum-seeking and refugee children and of the need to be sensitive when interviewing families who may speak little or no English.

3.3. Asylum-seeking and refugee children should be offered a school place as soon as possible after arrival in the authority, in accordance with the LA’s published admissions arrangements.

3.4. While admissions staff require proof of date of birth, passports or immigration documents are not requested.

4. Induction
4.1. Newly admitted asylum-seeking and refugee children will undergo a special induction to help facilitate their smooth integration and to ensure that they become effective learners as quickly as possible.

4.2. Prior to their child’s arrival at the school, an interview will be arranged with the parents/carers in order to assess their child’s past educational experiences and future needs.

4.3. If there is any confusion in assessing a child’s age group, a social worker will be contacted to determine which year group the child is placed in.

4.4. During the interview, parents are:

- Provided with an appropriate interpreter, or a bilingual member of staff will be arranged to translate for the child’s parents should one be required. Staff at school have the capacity to support incoming families with French, Mandarin, Romanian and Thai.
- Provided with the appropriate welcoming material such as a map of the local area, a plan of the school, the name of their child’s class teacher, details of any ‘buddy’ or mentor and the school timetable.
- Where possible the incoming family will be introduced to an existing parent who is able to speak the same language and provide appropriate guidance and support. School has a bank of existing Albanian, Polish, Romanian, Thai, Italian and Urdu-speaking families who are willing to liaise with and provide support for incomers who do not speak English as a first language and/or are new to the area.
- Shown around the premises and introduced to members of staff.
• Asked whether they are in receipt of benefits or asylum support vouchers, as this will affect the administration of free school meals and other benefits for their child.
• Given essential information, such as how their child will be helped to learn English and about their child’s rights to free school meals, school milk, travel and uniform grants.

5. Language
5.1. The following instructions are considered effective practice to help a child to learn English:

• Making sure their names are pronounced properly and they are greeted in every lesson.
• Making sure pupils know the names of their teachers and support staff and that they have the opportunity to write down their names.
• Sitting the pupil next to sympathetic members of the class, preferably those who speak the same language and can translate.
• Encouraging pupils to contribute to the lesson by using their home language until they can confidently use English.
• Teaching beginners some useful basic phrases such as ‘yes’, ‘no’, ‘thank you’, ‘please can I have’ and ‘I don’t understand’.
• Encouraging pupils to help give out equipment and collect books so they have to make contact with other children.
• Encouraging pupils to learn the names of equipment, symbols and terms essential for every subject.
• Asking pupils for the home language equivalents of English words.
• Using visual cue.

5.2. Goldthorpe Primary School understands that the linguistic background of asylum-seeking and refugee children varies widely, with some arriving in the UK speaking little or no English.

5.3. An assessment of such pupils’ linguistic background is undertaken as part of the induction process in order to ascertain their language requirements.

5.4. Classroom teachers take responsibility for ensuring that pupils can participate in lessons.

5.5. Pupils may be withdrawn from classes if they:

• Have little or no previous schooling and lack literacy in their home language.
• Have no learning behaviours in place.
• Are having problems coping.

5.6. Where a child needs to be withdrawn, alternative educational provision is provided.
5.7. Appropriate home language and dual language books are purchased for the library and multilingual pupils are encouraged to read them.

6. Examinations
6.1. Pupils who arrive in years 1, 2 and 6 are expected to sit national curriculum assessments and public examinations.

7. Free school meals
7.1. Goldthorpe Primary School meets its duty to provide free school meals for all asylum-seeking and refugee pupils receiving means tested benefits, supported by the National Asylum Support Service.

7.2. Parents/carers are obliged to provide the school with information regarding their child’s dietary requirements.

8. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
8.1. Asylum-seeking and refugee children with SEND are supported with the appropriate SEND provision, and an education, health and care (EHC) plan assessment, where necessary.

8.2. Essential information is translated into the child’s home language during EHC plan assessments and reviews.

Working together 9.
9.1. Whiston Worrygoose Junior and Infant School understands that establishing strong links with parents/carers is an essential part of supporting the education of asylum seeking and refugee pupils. This will be achieved by:

- Making all parents/carers feel that they are wanted and have a positive role to play in their child’s education.
- Showing parents/carers that they can always make their feelings and opinions known to staff, and that these will be dealt with respectfully and seriously.
- Demonstrating that parents/carers’ linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds are valued and respected.
- Showing parents/carers that the school is part of the community it serves.

9.2. Whiston Worrygoose Junior and Infant School understands that it is important to be sensitive to the different care arrangements within communities; not all children are cared for by their parents. Appropriate checks are undertaken to ascertain with whom a child lives, and that sensitivity is shown when invitations to parents’ evenings are sent out.

9.3. Links have been developed with agencies such as the following:
Refugee support and EAL teams within the LA
Local colleges and other organisations offering English language classes
The police
Housing providers
Social service teams
GP surgeries and any healthcare projects working with asylum seekers and refugees
Local organisations offering advice and advocacy
Local multi-agency refugee forums
Refugee community organisations

Vulnerable children 10.

10.1. Whiston Worrygoose Junior and Infant School understands that while the attainment of minority ethnic pupils is improving in the UK, and asylum seeking and refugee pupils are among the high achievers, there is evidence that some groups do underachieve.

10.2. A number of children from asylum seeking and refugee groups will be looked after by the LA, and the school ensures that these children receive the appropriate support that looked after children are entitled to.

10.3. Where a group is underachieving, the school, in collaboration with the LA, will put together a bespoke strategy for raising the attainment of that particular group.

10.4. Whiston Worrygoose Junior and Infant School recognises that after a traumatic experience, such as violent conflict, persecution or bereavement, it is normal for children to manifest strong emotional reactions.

10.5. Where pupils originate from countries where female genital mutilation is evident, or where it is suspected that a pupil has undergone such a procedure, staff should refer to the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10.6. Whiston Worrygoose Junior and Infant School will do its utmost to maximise the protective factors and minimise the negative factors, making it less likely that the child will suffer long term psychological stress.

10.7. Protective factors include the following:

- Having parents/carers and/or an extended family network, who can give their child full attention and good quality childcare
Having access to other people, particularly from their own community, who can give friendship and support
Having some understanding about the reasons for leaving their home country
Being able to maintain some links with their homeland
Remembering good things about life in their home country
Being happy in a new school, making friends and being able to achieve at school
Feeling optimistic about the future and making progress
Being able to talk about stressful events and gain control over them
Being able to ask for help when things go wrong
Having a hobby or interest to pursue
Having a specific member of staff or key worker to talk to

10.8. All members of staff are expected to be observant, and to refer pupils to the appropriate support if they are showing signs of being distressed.

- School brokers additional counselling from Rotherham and Barnsley Mind in order to respond quickly and effectively to children’s needs. Staff should refer via the SENCO.

10.9. Where internal support proves insufficient, vulnerable asylum seeking and refugee pupils are referred to external support, including, but not limited to:

- Educational psychologists.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- Other external mental health programmes.

Training 11.

11.1. Staff involved with admissions will be provided with training on the background of any asylum seeking and/or refugee pupils.

11.2. Staff will, through in-service training, be taught the skills needed to support and teach asylum seeking and refugee pupils.

11.3. The safeguarding lead will be made aware of the specific needs of asylum seeking and refugee pupils.

Policy review 12.
12.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the child protection officer and the headteacher.