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| **Looked After Children Policy** | |
| Policy Ref: | Educ014 |
| Status |  |
| Purpose | To set out the Academies approach to looked after children at the Academy. |
| Committees | Staff and Pupil Wellbeing |
| Other linked policies |  |
| Issue date: | March 2019 |
| Review Date | March 2022 |

**Objective**

1. To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after pupils (LAC).

**Named personnel for Looked After Children (LAC)**

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is **Mrs Beverley Oldham, Associate Principal**.

The named governor for LAC is David Thompstone.

**Definition of Looked After Pupils**:

1. The term Looked After Children has a specific legal meaning based on the Children Act. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act.
2. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days in a year.
3. The majority of children who are looked after by the local authority are placed with foster carers as it is believed to be best for children to live within a family environment. For some children however, residential care may be more appropriate. A child on a Care Order can be living with:

* Foster carers;
* In a childrens’ home;
* In a residential school;
* With relatives; or
* Even with parents – under the Supervision of the Social Services Department.

1. An ‘accommodated’ child can be living:

* In foster care;
* In a childrens’ home;
* In a residential school;
* Or even, very unusually, with parents.

1. Within School Systems:

* All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, need to be aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'looked after' and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
* Members of staff should be informed of the general educational needs of children who are looked after, and promote the involvement of these children in the complete life of the school including extra curricular activities.
* All relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and this information needs to be kept up to date.
* The educational progress of all children who are looked after must be monitored in order to inform the school's development plan.
* Intervention strategies need to be put in place if there is evidence of individual underachievement.
* The Academy has systems in place for liaising with education, carers and the Social Services Department (SSD) for reporting and recording absence from school and by acting to address these issues through early and positive intervention.
* All adults in the Academy need to understand and respect the need for confidentiality

1. Work with individual Looked After Children

* The LAC staff work with individual children, possibly through a carer, to arrive at a statement about their circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils.
* Where practically possible we enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan.
* We ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan.

1. Liaison

* Academy staff will ensure they liaise with the named LAC member of staff who is responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register.
* The Pastoral Manager co-ordinates education and SSD review meetings, so that any Personal Educational Plans can inform the child’s Care Plan.
* The Designated Teacher will attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to SSD’s care planning meetings.
* The Designated Teacher will be the contact for colleagues in multi agency working.
* The named member of staff will ensure that, when requested, they report on the progress of all Looked after Children to Education.

**Reporting to governors**

1. The designated teacher will prepare a report for governors on an annual basis. This will be presented to governors by the named governor. Even if the Academy has no LAC in that year a report will be prepared which includes statistics on when the Academy last had any looked after children and how ready they are to receive any looked after children.

**Training**

1. The named member of staff will:

* Ensure they are up to date and develop their skills and knowledge by attending regular training; and
* Where appropriate, cascade their training to school staff.

**Role of Named Governor**

1. The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

* The number of looked after pupils in the Academy;
* A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
* The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
* The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
* Pupil destinations.

1. The named governor should be satisfied that the Academies policies and procedures ensure that looked after pupils have equal access to:

* The National Curriculum
* Extra Curricular Activities
* Additional Educational Support

**Responsibility for LAC in the Academy**

1. It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Principal and the Designated teacher.
2. It is appropriate that classroom support staff have knowledge that the young person is being looked after only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.
3. In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the member of staff covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Principal and the Designated teacher.

**Admission Arrangements**

1. Where appropriate admission, records will be requested from the pupil’s previous school / Nursery. A meeting will be held with carer/parent and all relevant and involved parties and professionals, as appropriate, to complete base line information to inform the pupil’s Personal Education Plan and clarify contact arrangements. An appropriate induction will take place and new starters pack given.

**Involving the Pupil**

1. It is important that the pupil is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the Academy, the Social Worker and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.
2. It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a named teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they are asked about home, eg by other pupils in the playground.

**Communication with Other Agencies**

1. Ideally, Social Services and the Designated teacher. should meet when the young person becomes looked after, or when they join the Academy. This will enable information concerning the child’s progress and circumstances to be shared. The monitoring form should help ensure that all information relevant to the Academy is exchanged.
2. The Academy should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. end of year) are forwarded to the foster carer or residential Social Worker.
3. The Academy, the Education Service and the Social Services Department should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual Review of a Statement combined with a Statutory Care Review.
4. Between formal reviews the school will exchange information with Social Services and Education if there are significant changes in the young person’s circumstances, e.g. if school is considering an exclusion or there are significant attendance issues.

**Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures**

1. Each looked after pupil will be given an Personal Education Plan. This will identify specific areas of concern and achievable targets.
2. Areas for consideration will include:

• Attendance

• Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)

• Achievement Targets

• Behaviour

• Homework

• Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities

• Relationship to Care Plan

• Special Needs (if any)

• Development Needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)

• Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress and aspirations)

1. Liaison will be undertaken with Education Welfare/Education Psychology/Social Services, etc. in the assessment and review processes as appropriate.

The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the key indicators outlined under the role of the named governor.