



Children Looked After Policy

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Date Governing Body Approved: Not Applicable
Review Period: Annually
Staff Responsibility: Stephen Hoult-Allen

Date for Next Review: 1 September 2019

Introduction

The Association of The Collett School, Forest House Education Centre (FHEC) and St Luke's School, promote the achievement of Looked After Children who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. This policy sets out the ethos of the schools in their approach to meeting the needs of looked after children but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress.

Rationale

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. 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 looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

Definition

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after children' (LAC) or children in care or 'children looked after' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- foster carers;
- in a children's home;
- in a residential school;
- with relatives;
- with parents – under supervision of CSF.

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- in foster care;
- in a children's home;
- in a residential school.

Legal Framework

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004,

the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Governors (2009) and the Hertfordshire Policy Statement on Children Looked After and should be read in conjunction with it. All schools have been issued with a copy of each document and may also refer to the Virtual School page on the Hertfordshire GRID for Learning, www.thegrid.org.uk/virtualschool.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH). In Hertfordshire, [Felicity Evans](#) is the Virtual School Head. The Designated Officer for The Collett and St Luke’s Schools is [Elizabeth Kirk](#).

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what, if any, authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel “different”. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However, we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Headteacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked after children.

The role of the named Governor:

The named Governor, in conjunction with the Designated Teacher, will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked after students in the school;
- A comparison of progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other students in school and nationally;
- A comparison of attainment measures as a discrete group, compared with those of other students in school and nationally;
- The attendance of students as a discrete group, compared to other students;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Student destinations after leaving the school.

The named Governor should be satisfied that the school’s policies and procedures ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. Making Good Progress
- Careers and Youth Connexions guidance;
- Additional education support;
- Work experience;
- Full time educational provision – at least 25 hours;
- Employment Excellence careers guidance;
- Extracurricular activities;
- Pupil Premium Plus funding to raise to raise attainment.

The named Governor is encouraged to support the Quality Assurance Process for schools, on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after if offered to ensure and confirm the schools' best practice

The named Governor will be expected to have completed the eLearn on-line learning module on the Education of Children Looked After (Governors edition). This training may be accessed via the Virtual School page on the Grid, or www.learningpool.com/hertfordshire.

The names of the Governor's with special responsibility for Children Looked After are:

Neil Harper – The Collett School

Ros Wood – St Luke's School & Forest House Education Centre

The Headteacher will:

- appoint the Designated Teacher;
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training;
- ensure that all teaching staff and other key members of staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority;
- oversee the development of the policy on looked after children;
- be responsible for all systems to support looked after children;
- report to the Governing Body on an annual basis on the following:
 - ❖ the number of looked after pupils in the school;
 - ❖ an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
 - ❖ the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils;
 - ❖ the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils;
 - ❖ the number of complaints.

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After

The Designated Teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school.

Within school:

- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and wherever possible, accelerated;
- To ensure that there is an up to date ePEP with SMART targets that will promote progress;
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus during the Personal Education Planning meeting;
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how the funding is spent with outcomes evidenced;
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'in care' and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra- curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc.;
- To ensure that members of staff who teach the children looked after on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the Personal Educational Planning meeting;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services, (CS) and birth parents where appropriate;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date, used on a need to know basis to help the pupils overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- To track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress;
- To intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy;
- To inform the planning and where relevant, transition for children looked after post 16;
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them;
- To report to the Governing Body, at least on an annual basis, on the outcomes for children looked after,
- To have completed the iLearn online learning module/s specifically for Designated Teachers and to attend other training as appropriate;
- To ensure that school staff have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on learning;
- To support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after.

Work with Individual Children in Care:

- To discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or students;
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To ensure that the Pupil Voice section of the Hertfordshire Personal Education Plan or ePEP is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the student are faithfully represented in the PEP;

- To supervise the smooth induction of a new child looked after into the school;
- To develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers;
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

Liaison:

- To liaise with the member of school staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Plan;
- To develop effective communication with Children's Services, (CS) staff so that the Personal Education Plan or ePEP is congruent with the child's Care Plan;
- To attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services, (CS);
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school roll to the Virtual School as requested – progress and attainment data submitted each term.

Training:

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate;
- To attend the annual Designated Teachers conference and participate in area cluster groups for additional training and to share good practice;
- To develop knowledge of procedures by attending training events organised by the Children's Services, (CS), the Virtual School or local Designated Teachers cluster groups;
- To complete the eLearn on-line learning module and regular updates;
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE, other research or policy.

The Names of the Designated Teachers for Children Looked After for the schools are:

Kasia Fejcher-Akhtar – The Collett School

Josh Pollard – St Luke's School

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility.¹This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school induction will take place.

Involve the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal

¹ Education Law defines who is a parent very widely. It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. This means it is possible for someone who does not have parental responsibility to be a 'parent' because they have care of the child in question for example the foster carer.

Ref Section 576 Education Act 1996 Children Act 1989 (amended) 'If this were my child' (Local Government Information Unit 2003) For more information please go to: www.thegrid.org.uk/virtualschool

circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan by the Designated Teacher to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings.

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 social worker/teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. end of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's multi-agencies when appropriate. A copy should also be attached to the child's ePEP.

Schools and education and social work colleagues within Children's Services should endeavor to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. EHCP annual review and ePEP meeting or review.

Good communication is essential between professionals. It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if school is considering a change of course, there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision e.g.: behaviour or attendance.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each student in case will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of focus and include targets and associated actions to improve performance, progress or educational achievement. Areas for consideration will include:

- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations);
- Educational Data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages;
- Effective use of the Pupil Premium and evidence of impact;
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any);
- Attendance;
- Behaviour.

The ePEP will be updated and reviewed termly or at the point of any major change and contribute to the statutory reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is

accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the plan.

The named Governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all children looked after against the key indicators outlined above.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Headteacher's response.