

KESTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Child Looked After Policy (formerly Looked After Children)

Responsibility: Headteacher
Review Body: Board of Trustees
Date: September 2017
Review: September 2019

Legal Framework

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.

Furthermore, the term “looked after”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, which has been adopted by the DfES in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”.

Objective

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of children looked after on the roll of the academy.

In support of this objective the academy will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each child who is looked after has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place;
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes;
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles;
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child’s care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family;
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate;
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the local authority’s Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education/ Department of Health guidance on The Education Of Children And Young People In Public Care (Archived);
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies;
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher (the Designated Teacher);
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training;

- oversee the implementation of the policy on children looked after;
- be responsible for all systems to support children looked after in order to achieve the objective;
- be aware of the following:
 - the number of pupils classified as children looked after in the academy;
 - an analysis of attainment and progress measures of pupils classified as children looked after as a discrete group, compared to other pupils and nationally;
 - the attendance of pupils classified as children looked after, compared to other pupils;
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils;
 - the destination of pupils classified as children looked after when leaving the school;
 - the number of complaints;
- The Headteacher is accountable to the Trust for the achieving the objective and as such should be satisfied that the academies policies and procedures ensure pupils designated as children looked after have equal access to:
 - Full time educational provisions of at least 2 hours;
 - Public examinations;
 - Additional interventions to support educational progress;
 - Employment excellence career guidance [delete if not relevant];
 - Additional educational support;
 - Extra-curricular activities;
 - The most effective use of Pupil Premium to raise attainment.

Designated Teacher for Children Looked After: Mrs J. Evison Lisa Askew

The Designated Teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding children looked after at the academy. She will serve as the contact for social services and other agencies and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support children looked after within the academy. This includes serving as an advocate for all children looked after in the academy.

The Designated Teacher's role will include:

- To maintain a register of children in public care and to have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after and maintaining records regarding children looked after;
- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated;
- To ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan or PEP with SMART targets that will promote progress and to assist in co-ordinating the education and PEP meetings;
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the Personal Education Planning meeting;
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the pupil and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced;
- To work closely with the SENCO to ensure all children looked after with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children looked after 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 hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to the academy staff where relevant and carer(s), that this information is kept up to date and used on a need to know basis to help the pupil overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- To track and support the educational progress of all pupils 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 individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- To inform the planning and establish a system for the smooth transition of children looked after to and from the academy;
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan (PEP) are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant staff are aware of them;
- 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.
- To ensure that pupils who have been previously looked after or are care leavers continue to be supported and monitored in relation to all the areas mentioned above.

Working with Individual Children Looked After:

- 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 pupils;
- To enable the child looked after to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To ensure the child looked after has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues;
- To ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- To develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of children looked after 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 staff responsible for monitoring children on Child Protection Plans;
- To develop effective communication with Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan or PEP is congruent with the pupil's Care Plan;
- To attend, 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 and to ensure effective communication with all relevant parties;

- 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.
- To maintain and respect confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

Training:

- To develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training events organised by Children's Services, the Virtual School or local Designated Teachers cluster groups;
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate so that they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children looked after and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements;
- To ensure that academy staff have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on learning;
- To have completed the iLearn on-line learning module/s specifically for Designated Teachers and to attend other training as appropriate;
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE or other research or policy.

Teachers– To ensure that the progress of pupils in public care are scrutinised and that ongoing progress is being made. Any concerns should be raised with the Designated Teacher as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

- The Headteacher and/or the Designated Teacher have responsibility for informing all teaching staff who are in contact with the child looked after of the care status;
- In the absence of the usual class teacher, the Headteacher /Senior Leader should make sure that any supply teacher is aware that there is a child in public care in their class.
- As the academy's administrative office will be the initial contact of carers and other agencies with the academy, the academy's office staff will have knowledge of the pupil's care status;
- It is appropriate for support staff to have knowledge that the pupil is being looked after when directly involved on the teaching of the pupil;
- Other staff may need to know if there are particular concerns that require a whole-school approach;
- In each case, the Headteacher and the Designated Teacher will determine the extent of the information shared. In every case, only information that is critical to the working relationship will be passed on.

Admission

Children who are looked after are a priority for admission as detailed in the academy's published admission criteria.

On admission, the pupil will meet with the Designated Teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the pupil is made to feel comfortable at our academy. Records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and pupil as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the pupil's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, the academy will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.) – suggested wording but academy to include the operational practice]

School Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that children looked after enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Equality

We recognise that our pupils bring with them a wide variety of behaviours influenced by life experiences outside school. We aim to respond to each case professionally, objectively and compassionately. We are sensitive when working with children and families with specific needs and experiences and we continuously seek ways to promote successful partnerships. The basis of differentiation will vary dependant on the needs of each case but we will take into account the views of parents, staff and external agencies together with any special educational need or Education, Health and Care Plan. We will also ensure compliance with the Trust's equality policy taking into account pupils with protected characteristics and making reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Equality Policy <https://www.aquinastrust.org/about/policies>

Involvement with Parents and other Agencies

The academy recognises that support from home greatly assists a pupil's educational progress and aims to involve parents, carers and those with parental responsibility in an open and positive manner. The academy will maintain regular communication with the primary carer and will ensure that copies of reports are forwarded to the Social Worker in addition to the foster carer and parents as appropriate. The academy recognises that multi-agency working is crucial to the support and progress of children in public care. The academy will work closely with other agencies involved in supporting the achievements and welfare of the pupil, particularly the social worker and will exchange significant information to appropriate personnel between reviews when necessary.

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. Thereafter the academy's complaints policy must be followed.