

The Academy is committed to excellent Safeguarding

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Policy Date: 2007	Last updated: September 2016
Date review due: September 2019	
Portfolio Group responsible: SEN and Safeguarding	
Origin: SENCO	

Underlying principles

All school policies reflect the school values of:

Hope

Kindness

Courage

Integrity

Trust

Respect

Responsibility

Taking into account advice and guidance best practice.

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SCHOOL POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Background

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of Looked after children has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. In 1995, a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of looked after children and drew attention to:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

Schools are at the heart of providing a good education and they have the responsibility and additional funding to provide further support to ensure that Looked after children achieve as well as they can. A good education provides a sound basis for transition to a fulfilling adult life, while school provides stability, continuity and normality for looked after children, helping to ensure that these vulnerable young people have the best possible life chances.



The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to 'achieve to and reach their full potential'. The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles;



Terminology

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. 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, or
- Even with parents – under supervision of Children’s Services

Similarly, an ‘accommodated’ child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children’s home, or
- In a residential school

Virtual School Heads

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children’s 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). They support the Head teacher in ensuring the overall effectiveness of the School in its aim to close the attainment and progress gap between Looked after children and their peers.

The Virtual School Team supports and challenges schools and social workers to ensure we achieve this. You can find out more about the Virtual School team at www.devon.gov.uk/education

The Policy

The Objective:

To promote the educational achievement of looked after children who are on the school roll.

Governor

The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Looked after Children at Ilfracombe Academy: PAT GLOVER

The role of the governor:

The named governor 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 pupils in the school;
- A comparison of progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
- A comparison of attainment measures as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil 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:

- Full time educational provision – at least 25 hours;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. One to One tuition
- Employment Excellence careers guidance;
- Additional education support;
- Extracurricular activities
- Work experience
- Pupil Premium Plus funding to raise to raise attainment

The name of a Head teacher with special responsibility for Looked after Children at Ilfracombe Academy: SHARON MARSHALL

The role of the head teacher and SLT:

- Promote a culture in which Looked after children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out;
- Appoint a Designated Teacher for LAC;
(Designated Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team).
- Empower the Designated Teacher to fulfil their role and responsibilities;
- Ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Looked after children and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- Recognise the particular circumstances of LAC and provide for these in all other School Policies and the school's Development Plan;
- Ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for individual children;
(Sufficient access to ensure staff who are in contact with the child are aware of their care status on a need to know basis, including staff cover where appropriate and day-to-day arrangements such as the collection of younger children from school and automated texting to carers from school information systems)
- Be committed to working with local authority Virtual Head teachers to promote the achievement of children in care *(Devon's Virtual School can be contacted at any time, about any pupil to aid communications with other local authorities. The Devon VS website contains all contact details – see www.devon.gov.uk/education)*

Role & responsibilities of the designated teacher for Looked after Children

It is a statutory requirement under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 to appoint a designated teacher **to promote the educational achievement of looked after children who are on the school roll.**

The name of the designated teacher for LAC at Ilfracombe Academy: CARMEL BALL

Within school systems

- To ensure that the educational achievement of each looked after child on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and wherever possible, accelerated;
- To ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan or 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 Looked after Children on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the Personal Educational Planning meeting;
 - To act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
 - To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services, (CS) and birth parents where appropriate;
 - 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 student 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 looked after children
 - To have attended any relevant training for Designated Teachers of Children in care
 - 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 looked after children.

Work with Individual Looked after Children

- 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 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 ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- 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 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;
- 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 as they arise;
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE, other research or policy.

School Responsibility

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 Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children.

It is appropriate for a member of the support staff team to have knowledge that the young person is in care only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head teacher or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

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. This 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 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 Social Worker in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School. A copy should also be attached to the child's ePEP from 1st September 2015.

School, education and social work colleagues within Children's Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual Statement or EHC plan Review and a Personal Education Plan or 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 eg; behaviour or attendance.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. From **1st September 2015**, this became an **ePEP**. This identifies specific areas of focus and includes 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 each term 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.

The Head teacher: **Sharon Marshall** and Designated Teacher: **Carmel Ball** will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the Policy.

Date : 22/09/15

Review Date: 22/09/16

Policy / Version Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
2015	Updated by SENCO	C Ball	Nov 2015	Nov 2018
2016	Minor changes to terminology made	C Ball	Nov 2016	