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Key Education Centre

**Designated Teacher
for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (LAC)
Policy**

Key Education Centre

Designated Teacher (DT) Policy Regarding the Education of Looked After Children (LAC)

INTRODUCTION

This Policy is written following the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, issued under sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. This means that the governing body and the designated staff member must have regard to it when promoting the educational attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children. The Key Education Centre believes that in partnership with Hampshire County Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

Who are our Looked After children?

- A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales
- A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

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 CSF.

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- In foster care;
- In a children's home, or
- In a residential school.

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.

Legislation

This policy links to the following legislation and statutory guidance;

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'

Aim of Policy

To help provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

To support our looked after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.

To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, by asking the question, '**Would this be good enough for my child?**'

In Pursuit of this Policy, We Will:

- Nominate a Designated teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Looked After Children.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher:

The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised. In promoting the educational achievement of looked after pupils the designated teacher should:

- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put Looked After Children at a disadvantage;
- Make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support a looked after child's learning. Particular account should be taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what he or she can achieve
- Promote a culture in which Looked After Children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- Promote a culture in which Looked After Children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked after;
- Make sure the school makes full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of Looked After Children and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there;
- Make sure that Looked after children are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and that they have access to academic focused study support;
- Promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers. In particular, they should make sure that carers understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;

- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student.
- Maintain an up to date record of all Looked After Children who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEN Code of Practice
 - Child Protection information when appropriate.
 - Baseline information and all test results.
 - Attendance figures
 - Exclusions
 - How pupil premium funding is being allocated to improve achievement in personal target domains
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan for each child/young person to include appropriate targets and above information, which is completed once every term in the academic year. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Statement of Special Education Need, and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme. The PEP should include the following information:
 - 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.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within school in partnership with others as necessary.

- Ensure that the PEP is designed to work in 'harmony' with any specific learning needs and EHCP, as to maximise pupil wellbeing and development in specific domains
- Ensure that someone attends Childrens Services Reviews on each child/young person and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with the Virtual School for Looked After Children on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Looked After Children where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that Looked After Children, along with all children are *listened* to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of Looked After Children.
- Report to the Governing body annually on the performance of the looked after children who are on the roll of the school.
- Liaise with external agencies and other relevant professionals in a systemic manner in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for LAC pupils. These may include communicating with:
 - LAC team in Local Authorities
 - Educational psychologists /wider SEN team
 - Additional support services in school including School nurses
 - LAC nurses
 - NHS and other addiction abuse services
 - CAMHS, child psychologists
 - Social care worker/community care worker/ child practitioner
 - Residential childcare worker
 - Youth offending service

- Voluntary sector agencies

All Staff:

The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how Looked after children learn and achieve. Everyone involved in helping Looked after children achieve should:

- Have high expectations of Looked After Children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- Understand how important it is to see Looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- Appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- Appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential;
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, virtual school heads (or equivalent) in local authorities and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care
- Continue to engage with and utilise theory and strategies provided during the ongoing Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice whole school training to most effectively help LAC pupils personal development and wellbeing

- Seek support from the DT and linked Educational Psychologist if they require help in achieving development targets for the pupil.

Governing Body / Management Committee:

The management committee of the Key play an integral role in supporting the best possible outcomes for LAC pupils. They should:

- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children
- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC. The appointment of a designated teacher in accordance with the Regulations is a core function of the governing body. The guidance referred to earlier sets out what the school governing body collectively will need to do in order to fulfil its duty under section 20 of the 2008 Act and the Regulations.
- Ensure all committee members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- Liaise with the head teacher, designated teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- The standards committee will consider progress, attendance and other issues relating to LAC as a standard agenda item.
- The Designated Teacher will present an annual summary on progress
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC

Local Authority:

Good practice suggests that the Local Authority will:

- Lead on the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC
- Ensure that the education of this group is as good as that provided for every other student
- Ensure that LAC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care
- Make sure that every LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate

The Hampshire Mission Statement

Making Hampshire a better place for children and young people, where all of them, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, have the best possible start in life and are supported by the whole community to reach their potential whatever it takes