

POLICY ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE

BACKGROUND

Significant research has been done on children who experience disruption to their care and how it impacts on their learning and progress. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Directorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement for children in care 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 extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is therefore essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children who may also face additional barriers. All schools should have a policy for Looked After Children (LAC) that is subject to review and approval by the Governing Body. The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of LAC but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress.

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 the 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

It is also important to note that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the child normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decision is often delegated to the carers. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what, if any, authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. This will have an impact on permission for activities, to administer medication or to assess for SEND. A copy of this information should be sought by the academy.

This policy incorporates requirements set out in statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of LAC within the 2004 Children's Act and the more recent Children and Families Bill of 2013.

The governing bodies of The Boston Witham Academies Federation are committed to providing quality education for all its students and pupils.

Policy Aims & Objectives:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children (LAC) on roll in the academies of The Boston Witham Academies Federation.

The name of the Designated Teacher for LAC: Mrs Kerry Carr

The role and responsibility of the designated teacher:

Within academy systems:

- To ensure that the educational achievement of each LAC is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium funding during Personal Educational Plan (PEP) meetings
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding where relevant is used to support the learning objectives for the students and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced
- To liaise with the Local Authority's Agenda for narrowing the gap for disadvantaged children
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children 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 homework, extra-curricular activities and other groups within the academy
- To act as an advocate for LAC
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services and birth parents where appropriate
- To hold a supervisory brief for all LAC, eg to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to appropriate staff in the academy and that this information is kept up to date and confidential
- To track and support the educational progress of LAC
- To intervene if there is evidence of underachievement and make use of Pupil Premium funding to accelerate progress
- To intervene if there is evidence of absence or truancy
- To inform the planning and transition for LAC post 16
- To complete PEP when requested by the relevant Local Authority
- To ensure that the educational targets within the PEP are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant staff are aware of them
- To report to the Governing Body at least annually on the outcomes for LAC
- To access appropriate training for teachers for LAC
- To provide appropriate data and information to the relevant Local Authority in line with government policy
- To liaise with the Virtual Headteacher for the Local Authority in a timely and professional manner

Work with individual LAC

- To discuss with individual children to agree a statement about their care arrangements which they would be happy to be shared with staff and peers
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan
- To ensure that the child/pupil voice section of the PEP is completed via a 1:1 meeting to ensure the views of the LAC are fully represented in the PEP
- To supervise the smooth induction of a LAC alongside the appropriate Head of Year (Secondary) / Head of Academy / Phase (Primary)
- To use the academy data systems to track, promote and accelerate progress of LAC to narrow the gap with peers
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and other partner agencies

Liaison

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for Child Protection
- To develop good communication with Children's Services
- To attend, or contribute to LAC review meetings, care planning meetings and statutory reviews
- To be named contact for colleagues at Children's Services
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care to the relevant Local Authority

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC
- ensure that any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- respond positively to the child's request to be the named person they can talk to when they feel it is necessary
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's request for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate
- as with all children, ensure that no LAC is stigmatised in any way
- provide a supportive climate to enable a LAC to achieve stability within the academy setting
- positively promote the self-esteem of LAC

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing bodies of the academies will:

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children (LAC)
- be aware whether the academy has LAC and how many

- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for LAC
- liaise with the Head of Academy to which they are linked to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities in relation to LAC
- support the Head of Academy, Designated Teacher and other staff ensuring the needs of LAC are met
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body. These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years
- ensure that LAC have equal access to public examinations, additional intervention eg 1:1 tuition, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience where appropriate
- ensure pupil premium funding is used to raise attainment

ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Each LAC 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 action to improve the student's performance or educational achievement. If the student has an EHCP and is on the SEN register, the PEP targets will form the IEP targets. Areas for consideration include:

- Development needs
- Long term plans and aspirations
- Educational data to enable tracking
- Extended learning and extra-curricular activities
- SEN
- Attendance
- Behaviour

The PEP will be updated and reviewed upon request by the relevant Local Authority, but at least twice yearly in line with the LAC review. Any additional data required by the Virtual School should be provided upon request.

Academy reports will be shared with the Social Worker and anyone with Parental Responsibility which may require additional copies.

ADMISSIONS

On admissions, records will be requested from the student's previous school and a meeting will be held with the carer/social worker as appropriate- but always involving someone with PR. No LAC will be denied admission to the Academy without discussion with the Local Authority, LACES team and Children's Services.

PRIVATE FOSTERING

On admission the adult presenting the child will be asked about their relationship with the child. If their answer suggests that the child is not living with their parents then the adult will be asked if it is a private fostering arrangement or if the child is living under a care order. If the school becomes aware of a potential private fostering arrangement then the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children or the Designated Safeguarding Leader will be informed. If a placement is 28 days or longer, the academy and the carers have a statutory duty to notify the local authority, which inspects the fostering arrangements. It is the academy's policy to report all private fostering arrangements to the local FAST team in addition to the statutory responsibility.

COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Any email correspondence will use the bwaf.net email accounts. Confidential documentation will be sent as a password protected attachment.

Monitoring Responsibility	CEO
Next Review Date	3 rd July 2019
Approval Body	Board of Directors
Date Ratified	2nd July 2018
Chair of Committee Signature	