



Wingfield Academy

SCHOOL POLICY FOR
LOOKED AFTER
CHILDREN (LAC)
and Previously Looked
After Children (PLAC)

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The Name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children at this school is: Karen Pearce

The name of a Advisory board member with special responsibility for Looked After Children at this school is: Susan Gladwin

Purpose of Policy

To promote the educational attainment, achievement, progression and welfare of all:

- Looked After Children in the care of Rotherham Local Authority
- Looked After Children in the care of other Local Authorities who attend Rotherham schools.
- Previously Looked After Children

To ensure that all staff have high aspirations for LAC/PLAC that are reflected in the practice of the school.

The Local Authority has a statutory role for all children in its care and acts as a Corporate Parent.

Rationale

Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of LAC/PLAC have suffered a disrupted childhood and have experienced adverse events. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under-achievement when compared to their peers. Research shows that LAC/PLAC often achieve poor exam success rates, are more likely to be excluded, are more likely to be Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) after the age of 16 or are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system than their peers. Fewer Looked After and Previously Looked after Children progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

Legal Framework

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 (Section 20)

- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (Sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38)
- 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 (Section 21)

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.

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.

For all children who receive more than 75 days of ‘short breaks’ in every 12 months LAC status applies and an independent Reviewing Officer is appointed. As the care arranged is not continuous academic attainment does not have to be reported in the same way to the DfE.

All these groups are said to be “Looked After Children” (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Wingfield Academy believes that in partnership with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

School Aim

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

To fulfil our school’s role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children (and PLAC), by asking the question, ‘**Would this be good enough for my child?**’

Since 1 September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools have been required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) to appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of looked after children on the school roll.

a) The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Whole School:

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Looked After and Previously Looked After Children and that staff understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;
- To act as an advocate for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers, health professionals and the Virtual School;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up-to-date. **It is important to be aware that some children in care do not want all adults or peers to know about their accommodation or care status;**
- To monitor the educational progress, attainment and attendance of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.
- To include targets on the performance of LAC and Previously Looked After within the School Self Evaluation Framework.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- To report annually to the Advisory Board on the performance of LAC and Previously Looked After on the school roll.
- To celebrate the success of all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Work with Individual Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their care plan;
- For all LAC, to help ensure that each student has a Personal Education Plan. The PEP sets out appropriate SMART targets and support available;
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus is targeted at improving attainment and achievements.
- To consult with the child or young person and ensure they have an appropriate adult who will attend school events e.g. parents' evenings; sports; drama events to provide support and encouragement.

- To raise aspirations and ensure there are positive progression routes available at post-16

Liaison with other Partners

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children who are subject to safeguarding and have an allocated social worker, ensuring all LAC/PLAC in school are safeguarded;
- To help an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) co-ordinate education and Looked After Children review meetings, so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the child's Care Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone equivalent to attend, or to contribute in other ways to Looked After Children at care planning meetings and a minimum of termly PEP meetings;
- To fully engage with the Local Authority's process for PEPs and LAC pupil premium funding.
- To liaise with the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO) regarding LAC to ensure that a formalised graduated response to need is in place where required.
- To ensure that LAC/PLAC receive appropriate Careers information & guidance where applicable and enhanced support in order that they can make a positive and sustained transition to post-16 education, employment or training
- To be the named contact for colleagues in Virtual School Rotherham and other local authorities as appropriate;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information and school records between agencies and other schools, inclusive of CPOMS;
- To ensure the school admits Looked After Children in line with the Admissions Code of Practice; schools should admit all LAC separate to 'In Year Fair Access Protocols'.
- To work with whole school staff to ensure there is a shared understanding of the needs of LAC/PLAC and strategies to support them
- To ensure that the Head Teacher considers a range of strategies before exclusion for a LAC/PLAC, which should be a last resort.
- To work closely with parents/carers in order to support the child's education

Training

- To develop best practice for educating vulnerable children through attending training events organised by providers identified as centres of excellence
- To attend training and networks for Designated Teachers as appropriate;

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.

b) **The role of the Advisor:**

- The named Advisor will report to the Advisory on LAC/PLAC on an annual basis (unless it is possible to identify individual children whereby work on behalf of all vulnerable groups may be more appropriate):

Areas that may be reported on include:

- A comparison of test scores for LAC/PLAC as a discrete group, compared with the attainment and progress of other students possibly including those on the 'edge of care'
- The attendance of students as a discrete group, compared with other students
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions (and whole school strategies in place to minimise exclusions)
- LAC/PLAC destinations at post-16
- Impact of pupil premium plus funding on LAC/PLAC
- How the school captures and responds to Pupil Voice
- The named Advisor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after students have equal access to:
 - An appropriate and well-balanced curriculum
 - A full-time educational offer
 - Public examinations
 - Careers education, information & guidance
 - Additional educational support
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Work experience
 - Aspirational opportunities

c) **Responsibility for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children in School**

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 and Previously Looked After Children.

It is appropriate for Learning Support Assistants to have knowledge that the young person is being looked-after only when they are directly involved in the teaching of the young person or the direct supervision of them during breaks and lunch times.

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 Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

d) **Admission Arrangements**

On admission, records will be requested from the student's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker. Access to the child's Personal Education Plan record will be made available by Virtual School Rotherham if the child is not new into care. A date will be agreed for a new Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of a new LAC being admitted (or 10 days in the case of an emergency placement move). An appropriate school admissions meeting will take place. In some cases, it may be helpful to provide a mentor from within or external to the school community.

e) **Involving 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. It is good practice to consult and share with a young person appropriate records that are held by school and the Local Authority. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the social worker, their carer(s) and the Virtual School are working together to help them achieve in school.

It is also important that the child/young person is encouraged to voice their views and aspirations, and these are to be recorded in the PEPs along with the school response. Children/young people are also to be encouraged to attend their PEP meeting (or part thereof).

f) **Communication with Other Agencies**

All copies of reports such as end of year reports should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Foster Carer or Residential Social Worker. In addition, all reports, progress data, evidence of 'graduated response', impact of pupil premium plus spend and any other relevant documentation should be attached to the PEP.

It should be agreed at the PEP meeting what information birth parents will receive; this needs to be in line with the legal framework. A Social Worker will be able to advise on correspondence with birth parents and approaches to normalise consent for routine school activities.

g) **Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures**

It is part of the statutory processes for a Looked After Child they each have a Care Plan that includes a Personal Education Plan (PEP). This will identify, success, specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. The PEP system in Rotherham is through an electronic system (Epep), is accessible 24/7 by authorised staff, and where appropriate documents evidencing progress etc should be attached.

PEPs must reflect the high aspirations of the school, the child and other professionals involved.

The PEP should be reviewed termly (as a minimum) and include how the school will:

- Identify and support development needs (including social, emotional and mental health needs, short and long-term development of skills,

knowledge or subject areas and experiences – all through the use of SMART targets)

- Support and develop long-term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations)
- Identify and address linguistic and cultural needs where relevant
- Identify, in partnership with social care, when the PEP needs to be translated into the first language
- Support the needs outlined in the Looked after Child's EHCP if they have one.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council will:

- Provide a Virtual Head Teacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
- Provide advocates through Virtual School Rotherham to support/challenge schools, social workers, foster and residential carers to help secure the best possible outcomes for looked after children.
- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure that the education for this group of students is at least as good as that provided for every other student
- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every Looked After Child has a school to go to within 20 school days of coming into care or of coming to Rotherham from another authority (10 days in the case of emergency moves)
- Make sure that each Looked After Child has a PEP according to the Rotherham standard
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special education needs of Looked After Children and work collaboratively with schools, other services and agencies to meet those needs
- Hold events that celebrate the achievement of LAC
- Consider the views of all LAC through a variety of strategies including the LAC Council

Local Authority contact details for the Education of Looked After Children are:

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Rockingham Professional Development Centre
Roughwood Road
Rotherham
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