



Looked After Children Policy

Tees Valley Education Trust

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Introduction & definition

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and "Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children" 2018 and other associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children (LAC).

Children who are "looked after" may be "Accommodated" "In Care" or "remanded/detained" as follows.

- Accommodated (Section 20) - this is a voluntary arrangement, whereby the local authority provides accommodation for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.
- In Care - a child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.
- Remanded/detained - a child can be remanded or detained as in the following:-
 - An emergency protection order
 - Removed by police using their powers of protection
 - Remanded by a court following criminal charges
 - A court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months

Lead Trust Member for LAC: Mr Patrick Scott

Each TVED Academy has a Designated Teacher for LAC.

All TVED academies recognise that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. Each academy and its Local Academy Committee endorses the Local Authority LAC Strategy and welcomes LAC who may be looked after by any of the Tees local authorities or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in the Tees Valley area.

TVED's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of LAC is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all LAC.
- All LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the academy, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child, ensuring their voice is heard.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of LAC.

Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, LAC are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. The educational outcomes for LAC need to be improved; a higher percentage of LAC leave education with no formal qualifications with only a small % of LAC going onto further education compared to the general population. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for TVED Trust.

TVED Trust recognises that LAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. LAC may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

TVED Trust academies believe that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Looked After Child can be successful. We believe that each of our academies have a major part to play in ensuring that LAC can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Responsibility of the Head teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher, known as the Designated Teacher for LAC, whose role is set out below.
- Another appropriate person is identified as deputy, should the DT leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Lead on the monitoring and reporting of the Pupil Premium Plus grant and ensure this is published on the academy website

- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance, and the procedures for reporting any concerns and who they should report them to.

Responsibility of the Local Academy Committee

- Ensure that all trustees are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC - The Education (Admission of LAC England) Regulations 2006; Ofsted framework for Inspecting Schools; Ofsted Framework for Inspecting LA Children's Services.
- Ensure that the academy has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC.
- Ensure the academy follows other policies and procedures to support the needs of LAC.
- Ensure that the academy has a Designated Teacher who is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC are recognised and met.
- Receive a termly report setting out:
 - The number of looked-after pupils on the academy roll (if any) and how the Pupil Premium plus funding is used to narrow the attainment gap.
 - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

The role of the Designated Teacher 'LAC champion'

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the LAC in the academy, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.

- Promote inclusion in all areas of academy life and encourage LAC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Trustees, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil transfers to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware that a higher % of LAC say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding LAC.

The responsibility of all staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC to achieve stability and success within the academy.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC.

Confidentiality

Information on LAC will be shared with academy staff on a "need to know" basis

The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

LAC will feature as part of regular Vulnerable Learners meetings within each academy.

All information will be recorded on CPOMS, but some information on LAC will be restricted to SLT.

Record keeping and information sharing

TVED Trust and its academies are fully compliant with GDPR (see separate Policy for Information Sharing) and DfE "Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers" July 2018

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of LAC and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the academy or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary, and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the LAC is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Exclusions

TVED Trust and its academies recognise that LAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the academy will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening (refer to the academy Behaviour Policy for more information).

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of LAC.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those LAC who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

Support and resources

The Local Academy Committee will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Home-school liaison

Each academy recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential.

Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

Admission arrangements

Due to care arrangements some LAC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and, where appropriate, additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

TVED Trust recognises that LAC are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the each academies oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006) and in line with Local Authority admission protocols.

Links with other agencies

The Trust recognises the value of its academies working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. TVED Trust and its academies are committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from any form of intimidation, prejudice or segregation to achieve their full potential.

Linked policies

DfE "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act" 2004

DfE "Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children" 2018

DfE "Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers" July 2018

Ofsted "The education inspection framework" September 2019

Ofsted "Framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspection of local authority children's services" 2018

TVED Admissions Policy

TVED Behaviour Policy

TVED Anti-bullying Policy

TVED Pupil Premium Guidance

TVED Curriculum Policy

TVED SEND Policy

Policy Implementation: September 2019

Date of Next Policy Review: September 2020