



Children Looked After Policy

Tees Valley Education Trust

Version:	1.0	
Ratified by:	Trust Board	Chair's Signature:
Date ratified:	09/12/15	
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Circulated to:	All staff	
Date issued:	09/12/15	
Review date:	Autumn Term 2016 (Biennial)	
Target audience:	ALL TRUST EMPLOYEES	

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1 RATIONALE

The Trust Board, hereafter referred to as The Board, of Tees Valley Education is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils. We are committed to implementing the principles and practice as outlined in the Children Act 2004. The Children Act places a duty to safeguard 'Looked after Children', promoting their educational achievements and ensuring they are able to "achieve and reach their full potential".

The guidance sets out the following 6 principles:

- Prioritising education
- Having high expectations
- Inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes
- Achieving continuity and stability
- Early intervention
- Listening to children

The Board recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Promoting the Education Of Looked After Children" (July 2014) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 .

2 AIMS

The aim of this policy is to determine the responsibilities of professionals within Tees Valley Education in relation to Looked after Children.

3 DEFINITIONS

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

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.1 Co-CEO/ Head of Academy (HOA)

The Head of Academy will oversee the development of the LAC policy, and be responsible for the systems put in place to support LAC. They will report to the Co- CEO on LAC data in comparison to other pupils. This will be presented to The Board. Where children have active PEP's (Personal Education Plans) they will ensure these are reviewed termly by the Designated Teacher and that this named person reports appropriate information to the Board. LAC data (anonymised) will also be reported to Local Academy Committees by the HOAs.

4.2 Designated Teacher

Each academy has a Designated Teacher for LAC. This person will work collaboratively with the appropriate senior leaders and pastoral teams in each academy.

The designated teacher will:

- Act as an advocate for Looked after Children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities, and support with important decisions affecting their future life chances;
- Liaise with the Virtual Schools Head (VSH) in promoting the educational achievement for Looked after Children, including the effective use of Pupil Premium;
- When new to the Academy, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and their parent(s) and/or Carer(s), note any specific requirements;
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed (within 20 Academy days of entering care or joining Academy). This should be prepared with the child and the carer(s) and the parent(s) if possible), in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of personal targets, Pastoral Support Plans (PSP), Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP), career plans or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed. Inter-agency reviews of these plans will be organised.
- Ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by Looked After Children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements;
- Maintain and respect the confidentiality of all looked-after-children ensuring that personal information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis;
- Ensure that each Looked after Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to, who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues;
- Co-ordinate support for looked-after-children and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- Monitor the educational progress of all Looked after Children and intervene, in co-operation with other services/agencies, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from the Academy or internal truancy, or other similar concerns;
- Ensure staff and Board members receive relevant information and training;
- Encourage Looked after Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning;

- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- Establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools or academies to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.

4.3 All Staff

Whilst supporting LAC, all staff will:

- Have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children;
- Ensure that Looked After Children are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- Be familiar with the guidance on looked-after-children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- Respond positively to a Looked After Child's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- Provide a supportive climate to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability within the Academy setting;
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher/ pastoral team where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulty;
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's/ member of pastoral teams requests for information on educational attainment and needs as appropriate;
- Ensure entry to examinations for looked-after-children;
- Positively promote the self -esteem of looked-after-children.

4.4 Trust Board (Board)

The Trust Board will:

- Ensure board members are aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children;
- Nominate a board member who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the Board;
- The Board Member who is chair of the Local Academy Committee, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the Board as appropriate.
- For child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information respects the confidentiality of the pupils concerned and is shared on a need to know basis, as described in 'Information sharing – advice for practitioners' (DfE March 2015).
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

- Ensure that the Academy's other policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to Academy;
 - The National Curriculum;
 - Additional educational support and access to extra-curricular activities.

5 CONFIDENTIALITY

Information on looked after children will be shared with academy staff on a "need to know" basis.

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

6 CPD

The HOA and the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.