



Looked After Child Policy

Background

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of 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 because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. All schools should have a policy for Children in Care 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 looked after children but also the procedures that will ensure participation and learning for all.

The Children Act 1989 introduced statutory requirements and policy in relation to supporting and supervising Looked After Children. This has expanded upon further within Promoting the Education of Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (July 2014) and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (July 2015), amongst others. A child is looked after by a Local Authority if s/he is in their care by reason of a Care Order or is being provided with accommodation under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act for more than 24 hours with the agreement of the parents, or if the child is over 16 years old. For a child who 'accommodated' under a Section 20 voluntary arrangement, the Local Authority does not have Parental Responsibility for the child – this remains with the parents. When a child is subject to a Care Order the Local Authority is given 'shared' Parental Responsibility, and is responsible for the accommodation of the child, in addition to the other requirements of the 1989 Act. Looked after Children also include those placed away from home under an Emergency Protection Order, those subject to an Interim Care Order, those children on remand to Local Authority accommodation and those children in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

Looked After Children can be accommodated in the following types of placements:

- Foster Care – either temporary, respite, short term or long term
- With a 'Connected Person' – an individual who is a relative, friend or other person connected with the child
- Residential Children's Home
- Residential School

- Placed in the care of a person with Parental Responsibilities, under particular Regulations of the Children Act 1989 (Regulation 19: Volume 2 – Care Planning, Placement and Case Review, 2015)

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the aforementioned statutory guidance, in addition to guidance placed upon Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

The Policy

The Objective:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in care

The Name of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care for the school:

Kelly Quinn

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care

Within School Systems:

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people '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 school homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, 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;
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully and that all relevant staff are aware of them.
- To ensure best value when spending the additional budget share made available specifically for children looked after to support achievement.
- To advise on the rationale for the allocation of the Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus Allowance during the Personal Education Planning meetings;
- To be responsible for the appropriate allocation of the Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus for children looked after and to be accountable for how it is spent;
- To report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis (preferably each term) on the outcomes for children looked after.

Work with Individual Children in Care

- To work with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To implement the Personal Education Plan for each child and review it as required in the notes of guidance as this will contribute to the educational component of their care plan;
- To ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new looked after child into the school.
- To develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of children in care and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies

Liaison:

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register;
- To help communication with Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the child's Care Plan;
- To attend or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services (including the Virtual School);
- To forward information on Looked After Children's current and target National Curriculum levels to the Virtual School;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies and individuals, and report on the progress of all children in care on the school role to the designated agencies/officers.

Training:

- To develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority;
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate;
- To attend and participate in area cluster groups for additional training and to share good practice

Governor**The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Children in Care in the school:**

Nick Whitbread

The role of that Governor

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked after pupils in the school;
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked after pupils have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. Making Good Progress
- Careers and Youth Connexions guidance;
- Additional education support;
- Extra curricular activities; and
- Work experience

The named Governor will be expected to have completed the iLearn on-line learning module on the Education of Children Looked After (Governors edition). This training may be accessed via the Virtual School page on the Grid, or www.learningpool.com/hertfordshire.

School Responsibility

It is important that all teaching staff that 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 Children in Care.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is in care only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

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 Headteacher or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

Admission Arrangements

Upon admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with Primary Carer, Social Worker and Parent (as appropriate). This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school induction will take place.

Involve 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. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their primary carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan by the Designated Teacher to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker / Teacher / Primary Carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the classroom or playground.

Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. End of Year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Primary Carer and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School.

Schools and education and social work colleagues within Children's Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual or a Statement Review and a Personal Education Plan meeting or statutory review.

It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if school is considering an exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. School will play an active role in contributing to those areas of the Care Plan that are education related. The PEP will identify specific areas of success, of concern and include achievable targets. Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance;
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Behaviour;
- SMART target setting;
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- How additional resources are being utilised to meet educational targets with particular reference to the Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus;
- Special needs (if any);

- 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).

Best Practice dictates that the PEP will be updated at least once every school term, or at the point of any major change. A statutory review of the overall Care Plan, including the PEP, will be carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer at least every six months. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation of the educational targets within the Plan.

The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all looked after children against the key indicators outlined above.

SignedDate
(Chair of Governors)

SignedDate
(Headteacher)