

Promoting the Education of Looked After Children Policy



We believe that all looked after children and young people should have every opportunity to access excellent educational provision and achieve their true potential. We as a school community aim to be champions for looked after children and young people to address the unacceptably high level of underachievement by bringing their attainment more in line with that of the general population so that they experience improved outcomes in every aspect of their lives, now and in the future as adults.

Looked After Children - definition

The term Children Looked After has a specific legal meaning based on the Children Act. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act.

1. How do we promote the education and welfare of our looked after children and young people?

At The Edge Schools' Federation we will:

- provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children
- close the gap between the educational attainments of our looked after children and the general population
- make sure that looked after children and young people have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to appropriate support
- identify our role to promote and support the education of our looked after children
- appoint a Designated Teacher for looked after children who will take an active role promoting each young person's attainment and ensure that their wider needs are met. Our Designated Teacher will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate) and social worker on a wider variety of educational and care issues
- promote personalised learning in a culture where every child does matter

All staff and Governors are committed to and have responsibility for improving the life chances of their LAC. In order to do this a Designated Teacher will be appointed to lead on LAC issues. This Designated Teacher will be of sufficient seniority within the school to promote the needs and care of the LAC in the school. Sufficient time and support will be given to them to ensure they can carry out the functions required.

2. How do we achieve a whole school approach?

- our school celebrates the achievements of looked after children
- all our staff have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition
- the young person will have a special, trusted adult in school who is able to take time to listen to them. This may be the Designated Teacher or another member of staff. The Designated Teacher will retain overall responsibility for all LAC in the school.
- our staff are aware that being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and / or behaviour, due consideration is given to this.
- all out teachers are made aware of the needs of looked after children and actively promote their best interests
- all adults in school are sensitive to the young person's wishes over what information is shared regarding their care status

- our teachers help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis
- we ensure that looked after children are listened to, and have access to support and counselling in school if required
- our teachers are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem;
- our teachers are aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current home and carers
- effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established in accordance with school's policy on looked after children
- systems are in place to keep staff up to date about information relating to looked after children
- teachers actively seek training to help them fulfil their roles in relation to looked after children
- the Designated Teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained
- our school supports the engagement of looked after children in out of school hours learning
- our staff work in partnership with parents, carers and agencies
- we support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance; for young looked after children, there is clarity in relation to who is and who is not allowed to collect the child from school
- Specific funding (e.g. Pupil Premium) is allocated directly to support LAC in consultation with the partners involved and the young person

3. **Our Designated Teacher for looked after children is Dave Tinker**

Our Designated Teacher is

- the Headteacher

Our Designated Teacher will:

- ensure that the school does everything possible to maximise educational stability for the child
- track the educational progress and attendance of all looked after children on the school roll including Shropshire LAC and LAC from other LAs
- maintain detailed individual records on all looked after children
- prepare an Annual Report for the Governing Body and provide additional information as required
- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations amongst the whole school community regarding looked after children's achievements and attainment
- ensure that looked after children have equitable access to school resources and initiatives
- ensure that every effort is made to enable looked after children access a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting their learning targets and reviewing their progress
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning
- make sure that looked after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- have the lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school
- ensure that the PEP is updated and available for the Statutory LAC Review

- in conjunction with the social worker, ensure that the PEP is in place within 10 days of starting at our school and that it is circulated within 10 days of the PEP meeting
- help looked after children make a smooth transition to their new school or college, including making sure there are effective arrangements in place for the speedy transfer of information
- ensure that there is an agreed process in place for how the school works with other agencies
- ensure that school policies, e.g. Home School Agreements, are communicated to social workers and carers

4. Our Designated School Governor for looked after children is:

Mr Peter Cox

Our Governing Body will:

- ensure that our Designated Teacher undertakes appropriate training in order to fulfil this key role
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has sufficient capacity to meet the requirements of this role
- receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher which enables the Governing Body to make overall judgements about the Designated Teacher role in the context of wider school planning in relation to:
 - levels of progress for each young person, (on roll during the last 12 months) in relation to all children at the school (educational, social and emotional progress)
 - patterns of attendance and exclusions
 - process or planning issues in relation to Personal Education Plans
 - those who are Gifted and Talented and how those needs are being met
 - SEN; whether needs are being met through statements, School Action or School Action Plus
 - equitable access to school resources
 - access to extra curricular activities
 - how looked after children's needs are reflected in school development plans and are being met in relation to interventions and resources
 - training provided for the Designated Teacher
 - work with the Virtual School and equivalents in other LAs
 - the impact of school policies on looked after children
 - any workload issues arising from the role
- give careful and due consideration to the Designated Teacher's report and act on any issues it raises so as to support the Designated Teacher and maximise the impact of the role

5. The LAC Education and Health Team member is:

Rosemary Hooper

We will:

- work in partnership with the LAC Education and Health Team
- contribute to regular monitoring meetings with the LAC Education and Health Team
- seek support from the LAC Education and Health Team when required
- notify the LAC Education and Health Team as soon as possible of any attendance issues, exclusions or changes in the child's circumstances
- provide the LAC Education and Health Team with data e.g., teachers' assessments, targets, exam results, attendance rates, etc. as required.

6. **Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Pupil Premium Provision Plan**

We will:

- in conjunction with the social worker, hold and contribute to a PEP meeting and subsequent PEP Reviews. The Social Worker retains responsibility for chairing and arranging the PEP meeting.
- ensure that there is a PEP for each child to include appropriate SMART targets. This will be integral to the child's Care Plan held by the Social Worker, and form part of any other school plan e.g. Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme
- ensure, in conjunction with social workers, that all looked after children have a high quality PEP in place within 10 days of starting our school. PEPs will be effective and include SMART educational objectives and targets in the PEP action plan
- following the writing of a PEP, implement the educational recommendations in the PEP action plan ensuring that all relevant staff are clear about their responsibilities and tasks
- review the PEP within expected timescales. The PEP will be reviewed twice a year as a minimum (in line with Statutory LAC Reviews) and more frequently updated if required, e.g. change of care placement, Action Plan needs modifying through the Core Group process.
- The Pupil Premium Provision Plan (P₄) will be completed and the school will provide a clearly costed intervention plan linked to the pupil's attainment.

7. **Additional or Special Educational Needs**

We will:

- identify additional needs and make appropriate provision within school resources
- ensure equal access to additional school based opportunities
- ensure looked after children are prioritised for referrals to e.g. the Educational Psychologist, Specialist teaching and Support Services. This can be done in liaison with the LAC Education and Health Team.
- ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise looked after children who are underachieving and intervene at an early stage to improve this
- contact the LAC Education and Health team as soon as concerns start to emerge

8. **Admissions and Transitions**

We will:

- ensure that all applications for new admissions or transfers are processed through the Admissions Team
- ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience
- prioritise looked after children within school's own admissions procedures and aim to admit pupils as requested by the Admissions Team, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for looked after children

9. **Attendance**

We will:

- celebrate good attendance and encourage all parties concerned to promote good attendance
- establish a 'first day of absence' procedure where attendance becomes a problem
- inform the Social Worker via email or by phone, when a child is absent for three consecutive days or more. Contact will be sooner with the foster carer or residential home.
- ensure that the school's attendance officer communicates with the LAC Education and Health team EWO who may contact school to query attendance data from EMS
- acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern

10. Exclusion

We will:

- identify any looked after child who is at risk of exclusion and contact LAC Education and Health Team, Inclusion, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the looked after child missing days from school. This is essential and good communication with the LAC Education and Health Team is required at the earliest stage so as to prevent any escalation in difficulties if at all possible.
- ensure, in the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion, that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the exclusion, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education
- make sure, in the event of any fixed term exclusion, to contact the LAC Education and Health Team with details of the exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made
- a permanent exclusion of a LAC should be avoided if at all possible and is seen as very much the last resort.