Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

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Committee approved by	Foxford Local Governing Body
Author	Rachel Norton

Date	Notes

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Amber Hedges

Governor with responsibility for Looked after Children: Marian Simpson

Foxford School is committed to providing quality education for all its Students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

With regard to LAC the aims of Foxford are to:

- Ensure that all LAC have access to a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and abilities
- Ensure that carers, social workers/child practitioners of LAC are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- Ensure that LAC are involved in decisions affecting their future provision
- Where appropriate provide educational input to the Enhanced Care Programme – a multi-agency team offering additional educational, social and emotional support to identified LAC

This policy links to the following legislation and statutory guidance;

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after
- children'
- DfE (2024) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'

Who are Looked After Children?

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi- independent or supported independent accommodation
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, as the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents who are Previously Looked After Children
- Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Admissions and Exclusions

The School believes that the admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter Foxford mid-term and it is vital that they receive a positive welcome. If necessary additional support and pre-entry visits should be offered to help new Students settle into their educational setting.

Inclusion

This policy recognises the entitlement of all Students to a balanced, broadly based curriculum and reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. Foxford will ensure that appropriate provision is made for all LAC. Where young people need additional support to increase their engagement and help with behavioural issues, this will be completed.

Past experiences of LAC and previously LAC will be considered when implementing the behaviour policy. The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC. Due to the nature of the school it would be expected the Virtual School Headteacher would be involved throughout a young person's education, should a LAC student be in the position of exclusion then the virtual school would notified and involved in the process. Exclusion for all children is a last resort at Foxford.

Allocation of resources

The School ensures that resources are allocated to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The School will monitor the impact of this funding on the outcomes for LAC.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of provision, the designated teacher will produce a provision map once a term in line with the PEP meetings. This would then need to be cross-referenced with the cost of the additional support provided.

Personal education plans (PEPs)

All young people who are LAC must have a PEP, this may also be referred to as an ePEP, an ePEP is the electronic version of a PEP. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The school will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teachers, carers and where appropriate parents will contribute to the PEP. The child will be involved through each phase of the PEP process. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, these can address things that occur both in and out of school.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- LAC team in Local Authorities/ LACES
- Educational psychologists /wider SEN team
- Additional support services in school including School nurses
- LAC nurses
- NHS and other addiction abuse services
- CAMHS, child psychologists
- Social care worker/community care worker/ child practitioner
- residential childcare worker

- Youth offending service
- SENDIASS
- Outside education providers
- Voluntary sector agencies such as Safe & Sound, Children First, Young Minds etc.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an updated list of LAC in school. This list will also include any LAC from other authorities. It is important that LAC status is appropriately flagged up in the school's information systems so that the local authority can also access information. A report to governors is prepared at intervals throughout the year to keep them informed of numbers, resources and highlight other issues such as attendance and exclusions.
Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met. These are:

- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured.
- How Students and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept
  about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual Students is passed between authorities, departments
  and the school when students move.

Staff Development

All staff are encouraged to attend courses or internal training that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC.

LAC policy review and evaluation

Foxford School considers the LAC policy to be important and, in conjunction with the Governing Body, undertakes a thorough review of both policy and practice in line with the school monitoring and reviewing process. The outcomes of this review are used to inform Key priorities (Key 3).

Appendix 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.
- This may result in:
    - Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
    - Underachievement in further and higher education.
    - These issues may also affect adopted young people.

Foxford aims to improve life chances and outcomes for all children. Nationally outcomes achieved by LAC have been unacceptably poor and the school is committed to addressing this disparity. As educators and key stakeholders in upholding the principles of corporate parenting on behalf of the local authority we understand the importance and value of vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education.
- Listening to children
- Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- Providing stability and continuity
- Promoting inclusion
- Intervening early
- Help children gain access and make use of external services
- Promote high aspirations and secure the best possible outcomes
- Celebrating success

The School Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise LAC
- Ensure all committee members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- Ensure there is a designated teacher for LAC
- Liaise with the head teacher, designated teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- Consider progress, attendance and other issues relating to LAC when progress data is shared.
- The Designated Teacher will present an annual summary on progress
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
    - Admission to school
    - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
    - Out of school learning and extracurricular activities
    - Work experience and careers guidance

The Head Teacher will:

- Appoint the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher, the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
- The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the school
- An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
- The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
- The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Where appropriate, taking opportunities to support LAC students i.e. attendance rewards
- Promoting actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for LAC who are on roll at or linked to Foxford School
- Keep an updated list of LAC with relevant contact details including the named person with parental responsibility
- Attend relevant training for LAC
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate
- Ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering school especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care (see Coventry City's guidance on PEPs) and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEP at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties which cannot be addressed between School and carers
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for LAC
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement.
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- Report to the Governing Body regarding provision for LAC and inform relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the Social Worker the appropriate people to invite to parent evenings, etc.
- Prepare reports for the School Governing Body to include:
    - The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
    - Their attendance compared to other students
    - Their attainment (GCSEs/ Post 16) compared to other students
    - The number of fixed term exclusions (if any)
    - The destinations of students who leave the school
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCo in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.
- Provide a Looked After Children Information folder In Firefly to support the whole school CPD offer.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-LAC.

All School Staff will:

- Follow school and local authority procedures
- Keep the Designated Teacher (DT) informed about changes to timetables/programmes.
- Keep the Designated Teacher (DT) informed about a LAC's progress.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC
- Positively promote the raising of a LAC's self esteem
- Ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the Guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information
- to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the DT where a LAC is experiencing difficulties
- Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions as a last resort in line with legislation and being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports available when required.
- Will produce appropriate documentation to support young people
- The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:
- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC children.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-LAC as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
- Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.