



Looked After Children Policy

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Headteacher	Sign & Date:	
Chair of Governing Body	Sign & Date:	

Parsons Down Partnership of Schools

Education of Looked After Children Policy

June 2016

Who are our Looked After Children?

Children and young people become 'Looked After' either if they have been taken into Care by the Local Authority, either via a legal route under The Children's Act 1989 or where a voluntary agreement has been reached with the birth family. Most LAC will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth family.

The Parsons Down Partnership of Schools believes that in partnership with West Berkshire District Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children recognising that, nationally, LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion when compared with their peers.

Aim:

To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

To support our Looked After Children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.

To fulfil our Schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

In pursuit of this policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children in the School are taken into account at a School Management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend the termly Designated Teacher Network meetings and any specific training on Looked After Children which is required to ensure that they have the most up to date information on supporting Looked After Children.
- Review all policies and procedures regularly to ensure that they adequately address the needs of Looked After Children and that those children have access to all aspects of education, particularly with regard to admissions, curriculum, examinations, extra support, extra curricular activities, work experience and careers guidance (where applicable).

- Have a clear and consistent plan for attendance at all PEP meetings (Designated Teacher/Class Teacher etc) to ensure coherence and efficiency in planning and attaining targets. The member of staff attending needs to be free or made free from teaching commitments to attend PEP meetings.
- PEP meetings will be called at least annually and more regularly if required.
- Papers required for each PEP meeting will be available prior to the start of the meeting or there will be reading time at the start of the meeting if new papers are tabled (see PEP Agenda).
- Unless otherwise agreed the child should attend all or part of the meeting taking account of their age and be encouraged to express their views and will be released from lessons to do so.
- Following a PEP meeting, targets and actions will be circulated to all relevant teaching and support staff immediately after the PEP meeting or as soon as Minutes are received from the Social Worker.
- Further details raised at PEP meetings will be circulated to other teaching and support staff on a 'need to know' basis as agreed at the meeting and, in best practice, agreed with the child concerned.
- Discuss issues relating to attendance and/or exclusions with the Virtual School Headteacher or a member of LACES to ensure that there is as little disruption to the child's education as possible. When considering a permanent exclusion, a discussion will be held with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for any Looked After Children in the school.
- Maintain an up to date record of all Looked After Children who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or Section 20 accommodation.
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent and carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEN Code of Practice – School Action/School Action Plus where appropriate
 - Child Protection information when appropriate.
 - Baseline information, including an assessment of preferred learning styles and all test results.

- Attendance figures
- Exclusions
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan for each child completed within 20 days of a LAC joining our school or entering care to include appropriate targets and above information. This will be compatible with the child's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. EHC, and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.
- Ensure that a relevant staff member attends Children's Services Reviews on each child and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with LACES on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of Looked After Children.
- Provide the LA with termly attainment data to enable the Virtual School Headteacher to have clear tracking data for all Looked After Children.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy including access to 1:1 tuition.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Looked After Children where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified person they can talk to and along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to access pastoral support in school.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of Looked After Children.
- Report to the Governing Body annually on the academic performance; attendance and exclusions of the looked after children who are on the roll of the school and on the training staff have received whether or not there have been LAC on the school roll during the year.
- Ensure that strong links are in place with all agencies involved with a LAC.
- Ensure that the School evaluates the performance data for all Looked After Children and that it is recorded in the school's self evaluation documentation.

All Staff will :

- As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children.

- 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.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulty these may be academic; pastoral; behaviour and/or attendance issues.

All Governors will:

- Ensure they are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children.
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Nominate a Governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the Governing Body.
- For child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected
- and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the
- pupils concerned.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, on a bi-annual basis.
- Ensure that the Partnership's other policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school
 - The National Curriculum and public examinations
 - Additional educational support where this is needed .
 - Extra curricular activities
 - Work experience and careers guidance.
- Support the Local Authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement
- of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place in the Partnership even if there are no Looked After Children on roll at the time and that the Designated Teacher continues to attend training and is up to date in regards to the legal processes.

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's:

Inclusion Policy
 Equality Policy
 Safeguarding Policy

Admissions Policy

Policy Agreed: June 2016 Review Date: June 2018

Chair of Governors:.....

Structure of educational support for Looked After Children

Virtual School and Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES)

West Berkshire LACES aims to support young people, schools, social workers and other key people in raising the attainment of children in care.

Virtual Headteacher

The service is led by the Virtual Headteacher, who maintains an overview of the Virtual School and the local authority's strategic direction. Key responsibilities are:

- To support Children and Young People in the care of West Berkshire District Council in educational and preschool settings within the district or outside of the area and to offer support to those in the care of other authorities but placed in West Berkshire schools or settings
- To raise the educational attainment and achievement of LAC and other vulnerable groups
- To ensure that LAC have equal access to educational, training and employment opportunities
- To ensure that LAC participate and progress within a wide range of educational and broader activity within and extending beyond schools
- To ensure that the services are responsive to and informed by the voice and needs of LAC and those from other vulnerable groups

LACES Manager

The role of LACES Manager has been in place since September 2001. The overall aim of the centrally employed post is to improve the educational outcomes of looked after children.

This is achieved by:

- Operational responsibility for LACES and the line management of the primary and secondary support consultants
- Ensuring all PEPs are chaired and that PEPs are written up and sent out to all relevant parties within 5 working days
- Supporting young people post 16, particularly those going into Higher Education

- Planning the education of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Taking an active part in both the pre and post 16 Life Chances Teams
- Organising the annual Celebration of Achievement Event for children in care
- Training designated teachers through the Network Meetings
- Keeping designated teachers up to date with current issues and legislation through the newsletter, 'CLASS REPORT'
- Providing training to foster carers and social workers on the education system and processes involved
- Writing and updating local policies in line with national legislation and ensuring that these policies are communicated to all stakeholders.
- Supervising the dowry fund and Personal Education Allowances for looked after learners
- Supervising and training the XTRA 4U tuition service
- Advocating for young people through the admissions and exclusions process
- Signposting services to other professionals

LACES Consultants

There are currently 2 LACES consultants for looked after children. Both are currently part time posts and are for key stages 1+2 and Key stage 3+4 respectively. Their aim is to further support the academic outcomes of looked after children by:

- Chairing and minuting Personal Education Planning Meetings
- Participating in the Pre 16 Life Chances Team
- Contributing to the training programme for foster carers and social workers
- Providing guidance and training on issues relating to LAC, e.g. separation, trauma and loss, the significance of early attachments, etc
- Advising social workers on the education of looked after children

The Pupil Premium funding for Looked After Children

The Pupil Premium grant is to support those Looked After Children who are accommodated by a Local Authority for a period of more than 6 months. From April 2014, this grant will also be applied from the date that a child becomes accommodated or has a Special Guardianship Order or a Residence Order. Adopted children will also be eligible for the Pupil Premium from April 2014. The funding MUST be used to provide additional support for looked after children to reach their full potential. It can be used to support academic, social and emotional needs. The use of the Pupil Premium for Looked After Children will be

discussed at the Personal Education Plan meetings where the support can be identified and evaluated for impact. The LACES team will provide advice and guidance on the use of the Pupil Premium.

From April 2014, The Virtual Headteacher will be able to provide advice on the Pupil Premium spend for the additional pupils that will be in receipt in the Pupil Premium. It is a requirement of the grant that the use of the funds is published on the school website with a commentary on the impact of the funding on a child's educational outcomes. The child **MUST NOT** be able to be identified, so schools should be careful about the information that is made available to meet this requirement.