

Education of Looked After / Previously Looked After Children Policy

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Nationally, looked after and children previously in care significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that LAC/PLAC are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

Helping LAC/PLAC to succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Kent County Council and Kent schools. This policy takes account of:

- The County Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children: Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (*Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors*).
- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act").
- Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act").
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act.
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.
- This policy is informed with the guidance of 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children' DfE 2018

Veritas Multi Academy Trust's approach to supporting the educational achievement of LAC/PLAC is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.

- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Early intervention and priority action.
- Listening to children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

Implications

As for all our pupils, Veritas Multi Academy Trust is committed to helping every Looked after Child (LAC) or previously looked after child (PLAC) or to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

The Board of Trustees of Veritas Multi Academy Trust is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure a Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed every 6 months for every Looked After Child, in line with Kent's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for LAC/PLAC.

This policy links with a number of other trust and academy policies and it is important that governors and trustees have regard to the needs of LAC/PLAC when reviewing them:

- VMAT Admissions Arrangements.
- VMAT Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Academy Home School Agreement.
- VMAT Anti-bullying Policy.
- VMAT Complaints Procedure
- VMAT Equality Scheme
- VMAT Safeguarding Policy.
- Special Educational Needs including the SEN Information Report.

The school will champion the needs of LAC/PLAC, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Responsibility of the headteacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.

- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC/PLAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC/PLAC.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of trustees and governors

- Identify a nominated Governor for LAC/PLAC from the Regional Governing Board.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC/PLAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC/PLAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC/PLAC.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

Procedures: the Governing Body / Board of Trustees will:

- Monitor the academic progress of LAC/PLAC, through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure that LAC/PLAC are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure LAC/PLAC achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC/PLAC are recognised and met.

The role of the designated teacher for LAC/PLAC

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen [who] should be an advocate for LAC/PLAC, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for LAC/PLAC. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through the Virtual School Kent (VSK). Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on LAC/PLAC, monitoring how the School has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and VSK.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Attend PEP reviews as needed
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required – in case of accepting children from other authorities
- Ensure that each LAC/PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. *Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.*
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC/PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage LAC/PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC/PLAC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that a high number LAC/PLAC say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance of each LAC/PLAC on the school roll is reported to Welfare call each day.

- Raise awareness in secondary schools that LAC/PLAC are automatically entitled to an allowance (the Bursary) if they go into the sixth form.

Responsibility of all staff

All our staff across trust academies will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC/PLAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality with regard to LAC/PLAC and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC/PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC/PLAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC/PLAC.
- Be aware that many LAC/PLAC say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the school / trust's policy.