

Littleport and East Cambs Academy Looked After Children Procedures

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Review Timetable:	Annual Review
Review:	The document should be updated annually after ratification or earlier if there is any new local or national guidance, changes in process or legislation.
Purpose of Document:	To comply with legislation including: Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children); Care Matters: Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 “A First Class Education”). The Children and Young Person’s Act 2008 (Duty on Schools to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care) Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children).
Implementation:	The policy can be accessed via the Staff Shared Drive and will be reminded via the Staff Handbook and through any mandatory updates. It is also a statutory requirement to publish the policy on the school website.
Dissemination:	The policy will be available to all staff, teaching and non-teaching, and to the wider public via the website.

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Introduction

As corporate parents, Littleport and East Cambs Academy is committed to do all that we can to promote the educational achievement and well-being of looked after children.

Our Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is: Mr S Gaskins

Our Designated Governor for Looked After Children is: Rev Howard Robson

These procedures describe our approach to meeting the requirements set out in the Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children); Care Matters: Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 “A First Class Education”). The Children and Young Person’s Act 2008 (Duty on Schools to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care) and Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children).

In line with our Academy ethos and principles, and our commitment to the Corporate Parenting role of being a “good parent”, our policy is to identify specific roles and responsibilities within Academy to promote the learning, progress and well-being of looked after children.

The Academy recognises that the provisions outlined in this policy must be in place regardless of whether there are any looked after children currently on the Academy roll.

This policy was developed in partnership with Cambridgeshire Virtual School staff (the ESLAC Team).

1. Governing Body and Academy commitment to enhanced support for Looked After Children

- 1.1. The Governing Body recognises that it is the corporate parent (any and all adults working for the Council or a school) that has responsibility and accountability for the well-being and future prospects of children in their care. A good corporate parent is expected to offer everything that a good parent would.
- 1.2. We recognise that entering care represents a significant change in a child’s life. At this stage The State takes on an immense responsibility for these children by agreeing to undertake the parental role on a day to day basis. That means that all those working for the State at a local level in this Academy should demand no less for each child in care than they would for their own children.
- 1.3. The Governing Body and Academy will ensure that high quality learning opportunities and education are provided for all our pupils.

- 1.4. We will ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all.
- 1.5. We aim to support all pupils in achieving across the five outcome areas of Every Child Matters, whatever their background or circumstances.
- 1.6. We recognise that Looked After Children can be especially vulnerable and are sometimes 'at risk' of failure in the learning context.
- 1.7. Therefore with specific reference to this cohort of children we will strive to achieve the following aims:

2. **Aims for our Looked After Learners**

- 2.1. Our aims in supporting Looked After Learners in Academy are:
- 2.2. To ensure all Academy policies and procedures are followed sensitively for Looked After Children.
- 2.3. To ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- 2.4. To provide personalised learning and curriculum appropriate to needs and ability.
- 2.5. To support and monitor social progress ensuring key adults prioritise respectful and responsive relationship building with individual children and provide appropriate support for social development within the peer group.
- 2.6. To ensure that wherever possible Looked After Children receive a full 25 hours of education each week.
- 2.7. To ensure that Looked After Children pupils take as full a part as possible in all Academy activities and strive to reduce and eliminate any barriers that may stop them from taking part.
- 2.8. To ensure that carers, social workers and parents (as appropriate) of Looked After pupils are involved and kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- 2.9. To ensure that wherever possible Looked After Children are involved in decisions affecting their learning, the plans for progress and future provision.
- 2.10. To ensure that success is appropriately recognised and reinforced.
- 2.11. To ensure that any emerging concerns are followed up in a timely way with skill and sensitivity (e.g. changes in patterns of behaviour and attendance).

- 2.12. To liaise and cooperate with appropriate partners, in particular the ESLAC Team, to ensure that all plans complement and support the promotion of the educational achievement and well-being of Looked After Children.

3. Admissions to our Academy

- 3.1. The Governing Body supports Cambridgeshire County Council's approach to admissions giving Looked After Children the highest priority for admission to the identified school.
- 3.2. Our Academy will ensure that Looked After Children are named a first priority within our Academy written admissions criteria.
- 3.3. Sometimes care placement changes lead to Looked After Children entering school mid-term or mid-year if this is thought to be in the best interests of the child. This Academy will ensure that in these circumstances Looked After Children will be admitted to the Academy in a timely manner, even if this would mean that this would increase class sizes above the recommended maximum. As necessary, we will give a positive welcome, plan entry, offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help pupils settle into Academy.

4. Inclusion and Allocation of Resources

- 4.1. Our policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based, and stimulating curriculum and learning programme.
- 4.2. For Look After Children there can often be a need to develop learning opportunities emphasising personalised planning and planned inclusive approaches.
- 4.3. The Governing Body will ensure our Academy makes all appropriate learning provision for Looked After Pupils. Resources are allocated to support Looked After Children in line with this policy and with our wider Academy teaching and learning policies and good practice.
- 4.4. The Academy will ensure that a Home to School agreement is signed by the primary carer and a copy is sent to the Looked After Child's social worker.

5. Monitoring the Progress of Looked After Children

- 5.1. Progress for Looked After pupils in Academy is monitored and supported and is guided by Academy policies for teaching and learning.
- 5.2. We will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of Looked After pupils at regular intervals. This will be formally reported to the Virtual School for looked after children and the ESLAC Team.

- 5.3. We will ensure that the Academy makes an assessment of the pupil's needs and attainment on entry, to ensure continuity of learning.
- 5.4. We recognise the importance of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and understand that they are statutory Academy documents.
- 5.5. The PEP is key to the planning and monitoring of education for a Looked After Child.
- 5.6. The Designated Teacher will ensure there is a PEP in place for all Looked After Children in Academy.
- 5.7. The ESLAC teacher will lead on the meeting for Cambridgeshire Looked After Children and will support those Looked After Children from other Local Authorities.
- 5.8. The Designated Teacher will ensure a PEP takes place within 20 days of a Looked After child joining the Academy or becoming Looked After.

6. Attendance and Exclusion

- 6.1. The Academy recognises that Looked After Children are statistically much more likely to have a poor attendance record and are up to five times more likely to be excluded than their non-looked after peers.
- 6.2. The Academy will take specific steps to monitor the attendance of Looked After Children and will notify all appropriate partners at an early stage if there is an indication that problems with attendance might occur. Cambridgeshire County Council has a contract with Welfare Call Limited. A member of the Welfare Call team will call all schools with Cambridgeshire Looked After Children daily to ascertain attendance. The Academy will ensure this information is provided promptly and accurately.
- 6.3. The Academy will take all reasonable steps to ensure that exclusion is rarely used for looked after children and then is always only as a last resort, after all other avenues have been explored.
- 6.4. The Academy will make arrangements for first day provision for any excluded looked after child as it would for any pupil after Day six of exclusion.
- 6.5. Ensure that should a looked after child be identified as at risk of exclusion, then contact is made with the LA Inclusion Officer and the named contact within the ESLAC Team immediately, to enable early intervention/preventative strategies to be instigated.

7. Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- 7.1. Our Designated Teacher will coordinate record keeping for all looked after children in Academy.

- 7.2. Records will include individual learning plans, up to date progress and attainment records, PEP planning records, and personalised information relating to care context as appropriate. These records will be maintained in a single place, having regard to the statutory nature of some of these documents and the confidential information that they contain.
- 7.3. Looked After Child status is appropriately “flagged” in Academy managed information systems, ensuring information and planning records are readily available as required.
- 7.4. We will ensure there is ready access to information and up to date contact details for carers, parents (where appropriate), social worker and the named contact in the ESLAC Team.
- 7.5. All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving school promptly if there is a transfer to another school.
- 7.6. Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of the Academy staff team. We are guided by best practice and on the „need to know“. Wherever possible, pupils’ wishes are taken into account in sharing information within the staff team.
- 7.7. The Designated Teacher will attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to the statutory LAC review process.

8. Appointments within Staff and Governing Body

- 8.1. The Academy recognises that there is a statutory requirement to appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- 8.2. All staff and governors have a responsibility for the educational achievement and well-being of Looked After Children as a corporate parent.
- 8.3. The work of the Designated Teacher with responsibility for Looked After Children is to lead in this area, but they do not hold sole responsibility.

9. Staff and Governors Development and Training

- 9.1. All staff and governors are encouraged to develop via reflective processes. We encourage on-going engagement with relevant CPD to maintain and extend individual and team expertise in supporting Looked After Children to progress.
- 9.2. Our Designated Teacher makes particular efforts to develop good awareness and understanding of issues, guidance and developments associated with the Looked After Children context. The Designated Teacher disseminates knowledge and skills to colleagues in Academy as appropriate and necessary.

Partnership working and collaboration with the Local Authority, the ESLAC team and the Virtual School is essential here.

- 9.3. There is a specific statutory expectation that the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will be released to attend a programme of training each year to maintain and extend their personal expertise.
- 9.4. A Designated Governor will attend appropriate briefings and relevant development opportunities provided by the Local Authority, the ESLAC team and the Virtual School.

10. **Partnership Working**

- 10.1. Our Academy values the views of carers and parents. We firmly believe in developing strong partnerships with carers, parents and residential care workers to enable pupils to achieve their potential.
- 10.2. We will develop close relationships and collaborative work to promote the learning and well-being of individual children, both in and out of Academy.
- 10.3. PEP meetings, other Academy liaison and consultation processes and informal day to day dialogue are all seen as good opportunities to enhance our partnerships.
- 10.4. We recognise the essential contributions that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. We commit to developing positive partnerships with all involved. Our partnerships with community partners are extensive; some of our key partners for these children include:
- 10.5. **ESLAC Team** (foster carers, residential key workers, social workers, family support workers, Head of Virtual School)
- 10.6. **Other Local Authority Services** (educational psychologist, SEN team, behaviour support, learning support, medical officer, school nurses, CAMH) Education Welfare Officers, social care sessional staff, community care workers, residential care staff, youth offending service, locality team workers, independent review officers, advocacy services.

11. **Policy Review and Evaluation**

- 11.1. Our Looked After Children Policy is of highest importance.
- 11.2. We will undertake a review of both policy and relevant best practices each year. The outcomes of this review are linked directly to Academy development processes and the Academy Development and Improvement Plan.