

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Date Agreed:	15/7/21
Agreed By:	The Seva Governing Body
Reviewed and Updated:	15/7/23
Next Review Date:	15/7/26

RATIONALE & PURPOSE

Our aim is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of children and young people in public care. We aim to narrow the 'gap' between the achievements of Looked After Children (LAC,) Previously Looked After Children, (PLAC) and of those not in public care.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is implemented and revised by the Looked After Children Designated Teacher.

This policy supports the work of the Year Managers and Progress Leaders in the leadership and management of PEPs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

On admission the young person's records are requested as a matter of urgency and a Personal Education Plan meeting should be arranged to take place within twenty days. This meeting should be attended by the carer/ parent and social worker and the young person themselves as far as is appropriate.

The social worker will complete the PEP paperwork and will forward to relevant parties following the meeting. The school will plan an induction programme for looked after children. In some cases looked after children experience a number of transitions between placements but also between schools which can make it challenging to achieve their full potential.

We need to assist in managing this process by ensuring the accurate and speedy transfer of records and plans. This will be managed by the School Manager in liaison with the Local Authority.

Monitoring and reviewing from the School Manager will be frequent and ongoing. The initial PEP does not need the Social Worker's involvement, although it is good practice for them to attend. If they cannot attend the School Manager should lead the initial PEP within the statutory 20-day timeframe.

A Previously looked after child will not have a PEP but is entitled to the same scrutiny and support that a Looked After Child is.

INVOLVING THE YOUNG PERSON

It is important that the young person should be aware that information is being shared about their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them depends on their age and understanding, but they should be reassured that everyone is working together to support their education. It is important to establish the child's view of changes in their circumstances and that they are prepared for situations where they may be asked about home.

The pupil is consulted on all aspects of their PEP, according to their age and understanding and should receive their own copy of all or parts of it according to their age. This will be done by the social worker.

PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES

As far as is practical, the school arranges for reviews of all areas of the young person's progress to take place at the same time e.g. an annual review would take place at the same time as the PEP review.

This is achieved through liaison between the Social Worker, Carers, School Manager and, where appropriate, the SENCO

We ensure that a copy of all school reports is sent to the young person's social worker in addition to the foster carer. It is also necessary for the social worker to give consent for school visits if there are full or interim care orders they share joint PR with the parent.

The LA's Advisory Teacher for Looked After Children is invited to Personal Education Plan meetings where appropriate and should be sent a copy of all PEPs. The Virtual School for Looked After Children and the LA Attendance Team (Education Welfare Officer) are informed of any attendance issues at the earliest opportunity and as a matter of concern if there are more than ten days absence.

They are also advised of any significant behavioral difficulties and any other change in the young person's circumstances e.g. a move of carer or school.

ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Each looked after child has a Care Plan which includes a Personal Education Plan. The initial PEP must be put in place within twenty days of the young person coming into care and is then reviewed after three months and subsequently every six months.

It should be available at each Children's Case Review as it forms part of that review. It is the responsibility of the social worker, in partnership with the school, carer & Virtual School, to ensure every young person in public care has an up to date PEP.

The PEP includes important information on:

- Personal information
- Contact details
- Attendance
- Achievement
- Behaviour
- Involvement in extracurricular activities
- Special needs, if applicable
- Long term plans and aspirations
- Short term targets and action for improvements

The LA should have its own PEP proforma, which may be personalised for each young person. This form should be used for all PEPs, no matter what the local authority.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that all teaching staff who work with the child or young person are aware that they are looked after by the local authority. It is the responsibility of the School Manager to ensure that this information is disseminated

The School Manager will:

- Co-ordinate PEPs
- Monitor welfare and safeguarding
- Liaise with social care and professional from the LA

PROCEDURES

The role of the School Manager:

Within-school systems

- To ensure that all staff are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people in public care and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To keep up to date with local multi-agency procedures for this group of children and inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children and young people in public care.
- To promote the involvement of children in public care in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities etc.
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in public care.
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children and young people in public care, to ensure all relevant information is available to school staff and carers, and that this information is kept up to date.
- To monitor the educational progress of all children and young people in public care, and ensure that this information is used to inform the planning of provision for this group.
- To ensure the attendance of children in public care is monitored and that ten days absence is reported to the Virtual School for Looked After Children and the LA Attendance Team (Education Welfare Officer).

- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy.
 - To reach an understanding with individual children of the circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and other pupils and manage the extent of information sharing about the young person's circumstances. For example, it may be appropriate for the class learning support assistant to have knowledge of the young person's circumstances if this impacts directly upon their work with the young person.
 - To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan.
 - To ensure, in partnership with the young person's social worker and carer, that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan.
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- To ensure the smooth induction of a new child or young person in public care into the school.
 - To liaise with other members of staff responsible for related policies, for example monitoring children on the Child Protection register.

Liaison with other agencies

- To help co-ordinate education and Social Care review meetings so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the Care Plan.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to Social Care planning meetings.
- To be the named contact for colleagues in Education and Social Care.
- To ensure the swift transfer of information between agencies and individuals, and report on the progress of looked after children in the school.
- To ensure that a home-school agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the social worker of each child in public care.
- To ensure that children in public care aged 13+ secure appropriate access to the careers/Connexions service. Responsibilities of all staff in the school:
 - Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC
 - Ensure that all LAC are supported sensitively.
 - Respond promptly to the designated teacher's request for information about LAC.
 - Work to enable LAC to achieve stability and success within school.
 - Promote the self-esteem of all LAC; maintain confidentiality; and ensure that no child is stigmatised in any way.
 - Support the implementation of Personal Education Plans. The role of the Governing Body:
 - Monitor the progress, achievement and outcomes of looked after children

THE ROLE OF HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher will report to the Board of Directors on an annual basis:

- The number of young people in the school who are LAC
- Compare assessment information of LAC with those of other pupils.
- The attendance of LAC as a discrete group, compared with other pupils.
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions for LAC

- LAC destinations compared to all other pupils.

The Headteacher should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that young people in public care have equal access to:

- The teaching and learning opportunities in the school
- Public examinations
- Careers guidance
- Additional educational support
- Extra-curricular activities
- Work experience

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- All children in public care have Personal Education Plans which are reviewed in line with the required timescales, as appropriate.
- All children in public care meet their individual end of year targets (e.g. national curriculum levels in core subjects, target grades for external exams).
- As a group, the educational attainment of children in public care is at least as good as the average performance of children in the school.
- The attendance of children in public care as a group is at least as good as the average for the school.
- The proportion of children in public care who are the subject of exclusions is no greater than the proportion of this group in the school as a whole.