

2017

Looked After Children Policy



GROVE
SCHOOL & COLLEGE
A mind set to succeed

Looked After Children Policy

1. Purpose

1.1. The core purpose of The Grove School is to raise standards of achievement by unlocking the potential of both staff and students. The 'Looked After Policy' underpins the processes and protocols at The Grove, in conjunction with all Local Authorities from which our students travel as Looked After Children (LAC), which aim to provide a safe and supportive educational setting for all LAC students. As part of this, this policy sets out to

- clarify responsibilities with regard to Looked After Children;
- to ensure that these structures and strategies are in place to support the achievement and well-being of Looked After Children.

1.2 The neglect and abuse that have brought our children into care provide a moral, legal and pragmatic drive for The Grove to work together as corporate parents or in loco parentis to repair the damage. We know that a secure and successful education experience is a major factor in improving the life chances of our looked after children.

1.3 *'Parents want their children to have the best start in life and to reach their full potential. As corporate parents, local authorities should have equally high aspirations for the children they look after.'*

Promoting the education of Looked after Children statutory guidance for Local Authorities - July 2014

1.4 *'Excellent practice in supporting looked-after children already exists in many schools. The designated teacher role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice becomes universal.'*

The Designated Teacher for Looked after Children statutory guidance for the governing bodies of maintained schools and academies and designated teachers on their roles and responsibilities - 2009

1.5 This policy should be read alongside The Teachers' Standards and the following policies and other documentation:

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour, Student Support, Restorative Practice and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- The Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings
- The Staff Handbook
- Shropshire Model Policy for the Education of Looked After Children

2. Basis in legislation

- 2.1 Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (“the Act”) and The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations, 2009.
- 2.2 The Local Authority statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children [includes those LAC placed out-of-authority].
- 2.3 The Children and Families Act 2014, which requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer to make sure that its duty is properly discharged - referred to as the Virtual School Head.

3. Rationale

- 2.1. Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children (previously, child in care), and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

4. Definition

- 4.1 The term “looked after” was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child’s welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full time basis.
- 4.2 Furthermore, the term “looked after”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, was adopted by the DfES in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”. Care Matters (2006 & 2007) uses the term “children in care”, for all children who are accommodated by Local Authorities, whether on an agreed basis or subject to a care order.

5. Aims

- 5.1 The Grove aims to:
 - work alongside social workers, carers and all other agencies to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place;
 - provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes;

- ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles;
- ensure discretion when addressing a child’s care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family;
- ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies;
- endeavor to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential;
- ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The name of the **Designated Teacher** is: Mrs. Jan Jones*also the SENCo for the purposes of the responsibilities listed below

The name of the **Named Governor** is: Mrs. Dorothy Hanney

- 6.1 Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel “different”. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.
- 6.2 The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked after children.
- 6.3 The **named Governor** should be satisfied that :
- the school has a coherent policy for looked after children;
 - the school’s policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfES guidelines;
 - the designated teacher has received appropriate training;
 - looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum;
 - the Governing body receives an annual report.
- 6.4 The **Head Teacher** will:
- appoint the **designated teacher**, who will be experienced and empathetic;
 - ensure that the **designated teacher** has received appropriate training;
 - oversee the development of the policy on looked after children;
 - be responsible for all systems to support looked after children.

6.5 The Designated Teacher will:

- serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school.
- help to establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked after children of the school by:
 - maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis;
 - ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements;
 - acting as an advocate for looked after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances.
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children. The designated teacher will:
 - have an overview and coordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after;
 - maintain records regarding all looked after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child;
 - establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer;
 - monitor the educational progress of all looked after children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern.
- facilitate effective communication by:
 - building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue;
 - being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's PEP;
 - playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked after children;
 - helping to co-ordinate education and PEP meetings;
 - serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education;
 - ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties;
 - inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP).

- monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:
 - by meeting with the child to discuss who needs to know they are in care and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role;
 - by accessing Pupil Premium funding or any other support funding (from their local authority) to ensure fair access;
 - by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues (this maybe the class teacher in a primary school);
 - by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan;
 - by requesting support from the SENCO* and/or outside agencies, including the Shropshire Looked After Children Team, if a child in care requires additional academic or behavioural support;
 - by working closely with the SENCO* to ensure all looked after children with special educational needs are getting appropriate resources to support their learning;
 - by having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions;
 - by ensuring the involvement of The Grove's CEIAG Leads and/or Shropshire Youth (IAG) service with children in key stage four;
 - by encouraging all looked after children to continue on to further or higher education, or apprenticeships;
 - by ensuring all looked after children feel that they belong to the school community;
 - by line managing the LAC Mentor and supporting their interventions on a day to day basis.

6.6 The LAC Mentor:

- provides an additional service to existing teachers and pastoral staff in school by addressing the specific needs of the LAC students who need help to overcome barriers to learning both in and outside of school, in order to achieve their potential. This achieved is to be achieved by:
 - developing a 1:1 supportive relationship with the students and identifying aspects of their learning which they find difficult, such as organization, communication, motivation, etc.;
 - maintaining regular contact with families/carers of children in need of extra support in order to ensure they are fully informed of the child's needs and progress, and to secure positive family support and involvement;
 - contributing to the maintenance of records and information systems both computerized and manual with due regard for data protection and confidentiality;
 - working closely with Progress Leaders, Subject Teachers, Tutors and the Pastoral Support Assistants on targeting efforts at those at risk of underachieving, who are not already receiving effective intervention;
 - working closely with the SENCo to ensure that the needs of LAC students, who also have special educational needs (SEN), are met;

- liaising with relevant staff, in the comprehensive assessment of children and young people, to identify and address barriers to learning;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of strategies to the relevant stakeholders, for example, the Virtual School, Social Worker, etc.;
- facilitating in the sharing of information between school staff and partner agencies;
- networking with a range of authorities to share best practice;
- ensuring an up-to-date knowledge and full appreciation of the range of extended services that could be drawn upon to provide extra support to students;
- complying with all relevant legislation, school policies and procedures;
- extending expertise through regular and comprehensive training;
- attending all relevant meetings.

6.7 All Teaching Staff and Support Staff will:

- assist in the implementation and support of this policy for looked after children by:
 - ensuring that the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained;
 - remaining familiar with, and responding appropriately to, requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews;
 - responding positively to any request by a child to be the person they want to talk with;
 - ensuring that no looked after child becomes the victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and eradicated;
 - positively promoting the self-esteem of looked after children;
 - conveying high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.

6.8 Carers are expected to:

- be involved proactively in the education and care of the looked after child; their expertise is valued and their constructive input welcomed;
- attend ePEPs and other meetings as required;
- know how to support LAC e.g. via ePEPs, work at home, transitions.

6.9 Looked After Children will expect:

- to be and feel safe in school;
- to have their voices heard and responded to appropriately e.g. because they are invited to and feel welcomed in their PEP meetings;

- that information about LAC is only shared on a need to know basis and with due regard to their wishes, feelings, right to privacy and all relevant data security requirements.

7. Personal Education Plans

7.1 Each child will have an (electronic) Personal Education Plan (ePEP or PEP), which their designated teacher will take the lead in developing. However, the social worker's role in this plan is crucial.

7.2 Logistically, ePEPs shall run as follows:

- LAC will have an up to date, accurate and high quality ePEP from 20 days of coming into care or starting a new school, reviewed termly at a multi-agency meeting;
- the designated teacher, social worker and young person's sections will be completed prior to the meeting;
- the designated teacher will drive the PEP process and chair the PEP meeting unless otherwise agreed;
- the designated teacher will use social care advice to ensure the PEP links to Care Plan;
- all LAC who need it will have an EHC plan that cross references with the PEP;
- the designated teacher will ensure that SMART targets are set to enable LAC to meet their potential and that linked funding is used appropriately;
- if PEP targets are not being met, the designated teacher/social worker/carer or Virtual School will call a review of the ePEP [and EHC plan if appropriate] attended by social care and the Virtual School as appropriate.

7.3 The ePEP will consider:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses;
- interests, both in and out of school;
- developmental and educational and pastoral needs;
- future plans, and how these can be supported ;
- issues arising for the child;
- SMART targets to be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

8. Admission/Induction Arrangements

8.1 Looked after children are a priority for admission. We will follow the LEA's published admission criteria.

8.2 On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and the LAC Mentor/otherwise determined named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal

Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

- 8.3 In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)
- 8.4 In the initial meeting, parental responsibility will be clarified and consent forms signed to determine the wishes of those with parental responsibility or delegated responsibility.

9. School Trips and Special Activities

- 9.1 Given the delays that looked after children may experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that they enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Development

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the named governor, designated teacher, Head teacher and all other members of The Grove's staff to implement this policy.
- 10.2 We will monitor and evaluate the impact of our school provision, teaching and learning and support for looked after children. The annual reporting cycle will be introduced which informs on the following key aspects of provision:
- the number of looked after children on roll;
 - attendance statistics for any authorised and unauthorised absence;
 - the frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion;
 - how they are performing in core subjects, their progress and any value added measure when compared against initial baseline assessment;
 - the frequency of them taking part in extra-curricular activities;
 - the attainment relative to the targets set in core and foundation subjects;
 - the provision arrangements for additional support identified to include 1:1 tuition at school and any externally added booster work provided in the care home;
 - the quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP.

11. Complaints

- 11.1 If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated

teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

- 11.2 If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.
- 10.3 Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head teacher's response.

Signed:

Date: February 2017

Review date: February 2019