



LOOKED AFTER LEARNERS POLICY

Background

Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility on both the Local Authority and us all as corporate parents to work together to help Looked After Children to succeed in education, champion their needs, raise awareness and challenge negative assumptions at all levels.

Aims

As Directors, Governors and Staff of The Boston Witham Academies Federation we aim to:

- Make a real difference in helping to provide the best possible education for looked after children as much as any other in order that their life chances are the same as those of any other child.
- Encourage the pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable and to make good progress from what they are already able to do.
- Promote attendance, health and well-being.
- Seek to give our young people in care professional help, encouragement and support in order that they experience stability, safety, continuity and individual care.
- Encourage inclusion and challenge stereotypes.
- Offer support to and work with their foster carers on how to assist the young person's learning and enhance educational opportunities.

The Role of the Local Authority

Looked After Children are admitted to schools in Lincolnshire in the same way as any other child. However, if a school is full to their Published Admissions Numbers (PAN), the school can be instructed to offer an additional place to a Looked After Child. All state-funded schools must make the appropriate support and provision for a child who is deemed to be 'Looked After'.

Lincolnshire County Council has adopted a multi-agency approach towards raising the educational attainment and life chances of children in care in Lincolnshire. The Looked After Children's Education Services (LACES) works directly with all schools in the County to offer support for both the Looked After child and the school.

Definition of a 'Looked After Child'

Children are taken into care or can become 'Looked After' for a number of different reasons. There are 4 main groups or definitions of looked after children as identified under the Children Act 1989. These are:

Section 20

Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents.

Section 21

Children who are compulsorily accommodated; this includes children remanded to the Local Authority or subject to criminal justice supervision order with a residence order.

Section 31

Children who are the subject of a care order or an interim care order known as Section 38.

Sections 44 & 46

Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection.

Privately fostered children or young people are those up to the age of 16 years (or disabled children up to the age of 18 years) who are looked after full time for more than 27 days by someone who is not their parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sister or brother, and who has not been given parental responsibility by the court. This could involve children sent to this country by birth parents living overseas, children living with a friend's family as a result of separation, divorce or arguments at home, teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend etc. Parents retain parental responsibility for their child and should ensure that the proposed private fostering placement is suitable for their child. Privately fostered children and young people are safeguarded by the Children Act 1989 and associated regulations.

Private foster carers and birth parents must notify the Local Authority of a private fostering arrangement but schools also play an important role as they are often the first point of contact for parents and carers and can explain the duty to notify the Local Authority and the support available. The schools in our Trust will notify the Customer Service Centre (Tel: 01522 782111) on their becoming aware of a private fostering arrangement.

Directors Board: Role and Responsibilities

The Trust's Board of Directors will:

- Ensure the Trust's policy and procedures are in line with Local Authority guidance.
- Review the progress that looked after children are making across the Trust on an annual basis and identify if there are barriers to their learning and progress that need to be addressed via changes to Trust-wide policy and procedures (Trust strategic

planning). In order to assist them with this an annual report will be presented to the Directors by Trust lead for Teaching and Learning.

Governing Body: Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body of each school within the Trust will:

- Appoint a designated teacher for Looked After Children.
- Appoint a named Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children.
- Monitor the progress that Looked After Children are making in their school, and identify if there are barriers to their next steps of learning and progress that need to be addressed, (via a termly report from on the progress of LAC presented by the appointed designated teacher).

Head of School: Roles and Responsibilities

Principal/Head of School at each Trust school will:

- Implement the LAC Policy and its procedures.
- Ensure staff members are aware that the support of Looked After Children is a key priority.
- Complete the termly LACES return to the Local Authority designated person.
- Ensure that all staff members receive appropriate guidance and training as part of their induction and continuous professional development.
- Allow the designated teacher for Looked After Children the time and necessary facilities to carry out their duties and to support them at all times.
- Show personal interest in the development of Looked After Children within the school.
- Actively challenge negative stereotypes of Looked After Children and ensure all staff have the highest expectations of pupils.
- Produce an annual report on the progress of Looked after Children to the Governing Body.
- Record the provision for and outcomes of Looked After Children in all appropriate policies and procedures, the School Development Plan and specific reports on pupils' progress.

Designated Teacher: Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher at each Trust school will:

- Champion the cause of Looked After Children within the school and ensure they are receiving suitable provision.
- Ensure all Looked After Children know the identity and role of the Designated Teacher and what support is available.
- Ensure that teachers who need to know the identity of Looked After Children are informed.
- Ensure that all staff members treat information regarding Looked After Children confidentially.

- Ensure all that is practicable is done to raise the attainment of Looked After Children, including ensuring:
 - All Looked After Children receive a smooth induction into the school and that the school obtains all relevant past history.
 - Pupils are following appropriate curriculums.
 - Educational targets are established/reviewed on a termly basis (to be recorded into the relevant sections of the child’s Personal Education Plan. Note: The PEP should be established within a 10-school working day period for any looked after child on any of our schools’ roll. Children transferring from another school onto our roll must have their e-pep initiated within a 20 day period).
 - Pupils are provided with all possible individual assistance in developing their basic literacy, reading and numeracy skills.
 - Where children are underachieving, intervention strategies are put in place.
 - Suitable support is provided during times of transition.
 - If Looked After Children are not achieving as expected, behaving poorly or failing to attend school, additional interventions are put in place.
 - Looked After Children are encouraged to be involved in extracurricular activities both in and outside school.
 - Mentoring or counselling is available as needed.
- Act as a liaison between agencies as necessary.
- Take the lead monitoring role on the use of Pupil Premium for LAC children. (The pupil premium is additional funding available to schools in England to raise the attainment of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers – see Trust’s Pupil Premium Policy).
- Keep up-to-date with all DfE and Ofsted guidance and its application by attending the appropriate training and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding looked after children.
- Establish good working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews.
- Ensure the transfer of records if a looked after child moves school.

Teaching & Support Staff: Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers and Support Staff will:

- Be aware of Looked After Children in their classes and provide them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision.
- Convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.
- Be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews.
- Preserve confidentiality and show sensitivity and understanding.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied and be vigilant of the signs.

- Promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children.
- Respond positively if a looked after pupil requests them to be the person they want to talk to.

Communication with Agencies

Each individual Trust school will:

- Ensure that a copy of all reports is forwarded to Looked After Children's social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- Co-ordinate their review meetings, for example, hold their Annual Review of Looked After Children with their Statutory Care Review.
- Work with other agencies to exchange information such as change in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues.

Monitoring and Assessment

Each looked after pupil will have a Care Plan in place that includes a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The child's social worker will work with the school's designated person to develop the PEP. Combined, the Care Plan and PEP will include information and achievable goals regarding:

- Attendance
- Achievement
- Behaviour
- Extra-curricular involvement
- Development needs
- Long term plans and aspirations

PEPs will be updated at least every six months.

The Designated person for each school will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all Looked After Children in their school.

The annual report will include:

- The number of looked after children on roll.
- Attendance statistics for LAC.
- The frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion(s) of LAC.
- How LAC are performing in core subjects, their progress and any value added measure when compared against their initial baseline assessment.
- The frequency of them taking part in extra-curricular activities.
- Their attainment relative to the targets set in core subjects.
- The range of additional support in place for these pupils.
- The quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP.
- The expenditure of LAC funding (Pupil premium – See appendix 1).

We are aware that the OFSTED inspection framework will consider the provisions that we, as a whole school, have put in place to support looked after children. We understand that a

judgement will be made within the OFSTED framework in terms of how far this school is able to support looked after children. The formal report will include comments about the progress and support provided to these vulnerable young people.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy
- Admissions Policy

It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

APPENDIX 1

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PUPIL PREMIUM 2015

It is the responsibility of all Virtual Schools Heads (VSH) for LAC to ensure that the Pupil Premium of £1900.00 for every LAC is used effectively by the school to raise attainment and achievement and this must be identified on the LAC's PEP

The condition of payment of LAC Pupil Premium Grant (DfE) indicates the funding responsibility of the VSH to allocate and approve the Pupil Premium Grant, please see the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-grant-2015-to-2016-conditions-of-grant>

Funding

The changes in the management of LAC pupil premium grant, as stipulated by the DfE from April 2014, requires the virtual school head for LAC to allocate this funding based on the needs of the child and evidence that the school requires additional funding to meet those needs. All Lincolnshire Looked After Children will automatically be allocated £600.00. Looked After Children placed in independent schools or Lincolnshire TLC will receive the initially £600.00 as these are already funded at a higher level.

Additional funding can be requested following the ePEP and approved/allocated by Lincolnshire's Virtual School for LAC in response to the information and evidence provided through the PEP and the new pupil premium grant application found at:

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/at-school/the-virtual-school-for-looked-after-children/>

Pupil premium grant applications will be processed monthly by the Virtual school.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the VSH have to give the money to schools?

There is no requirement to do so. There is, however, a strong expectation that virtual school, heads will pass on pupil premium funding onto a child's education setting to be used to meet additional needs set out in his or her Personal Education Plan. That can be passed to the school on a termly or annual basis. Any funding not passed down to schools by the end of the financial year will have to be returned to the Department.

Does the VSH have to give £1900.00 to schools or can they give a higher or lower amount?

The conditions of grant state that grant allocation for looked after children must be managed by the virtual school head. It is for the virtual school head to decide whether to provide £1900.00 to a school for a looked after child or a higher or lower amount. They can also

decide on whether to pay termly or annually. They can also link allocation to the content of the Personal Education Plan as agreed with the school.

Does the pupil premium for looked after children need to be passed to non-mainstream schools?

There is no requirement to do so there should be a discussion about what provision is being delivered and what would be provided in addition to that in accordance with the child's Personal Education Plan, if the pupil premium funding was passed on to the non-mainstream education setting.

Are VSHs accountable for the use and impact of the pupil premium on the achievement of looked after children, in the same way as head teachers?

VSHs are responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating pupil premium funding to benefit children looked after by their authority. That means:

- making sure that pupil premium funding for looked after children is spent effectively and fully, given any underspend needs to be returned to the Department at the end of the financial year;
- being able to demonstrate how pupil premium funding managed by the virtual school head is linked to raising achievement for looked after children and closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers; and
- having arrangements in place to engage with the looked after child's school (usually with the designated teacher) about how pupil premium funding allocated to the school is contributing to meet the needs identified in his/her Personal Education Plan.

Schools are accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all disadvantaged pupils who attract pupil premium on their roll, through Ofsted inspections and KS2/KS4 school performance tables. VSHs and others involved in Personal Education Plans will want a constructive dialogue with schools about how best to support looked after children using the pupil premium.

Other Local Authority Looked After Children

Lincolnshire Schools who have LAC from other authorities on their roll must contact the VSH within the LAC's home authority to request LAC Pupil Premium Grant. All VSHs for LAC are responsible for the allocation of Pupil Premium for all school aged LAC belonging to their authority even though the LAC is educated in a Lincolnshire School. The name and contact number of other authority VSH for LAC can be requested from Lincolnshire LACES

For any looked after child pupil premium enquiries please contact Karen Bailey, LACES manager via email Karen.bailey@lincolnshire.gov.uk or on 01522 553622