



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Date reviewed	June 2024
Frequency	Annually
Next review date	July 2025
Reviewed by	Health & Safety, Premises and Safeguarding Committee

Signed:

Dated: 11/07/2024

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Dated: 11/07/2024

Principal

Purpose

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children within Goldington Academy.

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Looked After Children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that considerable educational underachievement exists when compared to their peers.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is '**looked after**' by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- ☐ children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- ☐ children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- ☐ children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- ☐ children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term '**In Care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the Court under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with Foster Carers, in a Children's Home, in a Residential School, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Bedford.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children (IAPLAC) means:

- children no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are:
 1. the subject of an adoption order,
 2. special guardianship order, or
 3. child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person

(but not which governs only where a child is to spend time and/or contact); or

- children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious or other organisation, the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society).

Introduction

Goldington Academy aims to promote the educational attainment, achievement and welfare of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children. The Governing body is committed to providing a quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. The Governing Body recognises that, nationally, there is educational underachievement of Looked After Children, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance "The designated teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children" February 2018, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to achieve and reach their full potential.

Aims

The designated teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children will ensure:

- All staff, both teaching and support staff, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- All staff, both teaching and support staff, are aware of the importance of reporting any safeguarding/welfare/educational concerns in relation to Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, to the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children through annual safeguarding training in school and regular updates throughout the year in staff briefings/emails;
- Members of staff are informed of the general educational needs of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and promote the involvement of these children in lessons as well as homework clubs, extra-curricular activities (including trips and visits) and targeted interventions.
- The social and emotional needs of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are fully met by ensuring a strong pastoral structure is in place, involving regular meetings between the child and the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (or a representative);
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children acts as an advocate for children and young people in care;

- Systems for liaising with carers and colleagues are developed and monitored;
- The educational progress of all children who are looked-after is monitored in order to inform the school's development plan;
- Intervention occurs if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- The educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully and that all relevant staff are aware of them;
- Any funding received specifically for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children is used appropriately to support the needs of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children in the school and the data is made available for all Personal Education Plan meetings and Looked After Child reviews.

Work with Individual Children in Care

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (or a representative) will:

- Work with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- Work with the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Personal Education Plan (PEP);
- Support the supervised smooth induction of a new Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Children into the school;
- Develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and close the gap between them and their peers;
- Support additional learning opportunities that may be available from partner agencies;
- Ensure prioritised one-to-one tuition for each Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Child, if appropriate
- Complete the PEP on a termly basis for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and complete a review half termly for both Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to PEP meetings and Looked After Child Reviews;
- Attend regular training and cascade information to staff as necessary
- Provide a central point of contact for all professionals working with each Looked After Child

- Monitor the educational progress, attendance, and behaviour record of each Looked After Child and Previously Looked After Child and intervene at any early stage if issues arise

Governor

A Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children in the school shall be nominated.

The role of that governor

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on a termly basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked-after and previously looked after pupils in the school;
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children have equal access to:

- The Curriculum;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. One-to-one Tuition
- Additional education support;
- Extra-curricular activities.

School Responsibility

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after, or have been previously looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Principal and/or the Designated Teacher.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is in care, or have been previously looked after only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Principal or the Designated Teacher.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility¹. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school induction will take place.

Involve the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan (PEP), by either the Designated Teacher or Learning Mentor, to inform PEP meetings and Looked After Child review meetings.

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

Communication with Other Agencies

The school should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. End of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School.

¹ *Education Law defines who is a parent very widely. It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. This means it is possible for someone who does not have parental responsibility to be a 'parent' because they have care of the child in question for example the foster carer.*

Ref

*Section 576 Education Act 1996
Children Act 1989 (amended)*

It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if the school is considering an exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:

Any Special Educational Needs, including English As an additional Language (EAL), will be promptly identified, bearing in mind that a Looked After Child and Previously Looked After Children may have missed some schooling.

Suitable learning support will be provided and the SENDCO and Designated Teacher will be responsible for liaising with carers and other professionals

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures – LAC only

Each pupil in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the Social worker and the Designated Teacher for Children in Care. This will identify specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance;
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Behaviour;
- Extended learning opportunities;
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities;
- Special needs (if any);
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).

The PEP, once approved by the Virtual School will be updated and reviewed each term or at the point of any major change and contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher, working alongside the designated Learning Mentor and other key staff, is accountable for the implementation of the educational targets within the Plan.

Transfer of the official school PEP record

The designated teacher has a key role in helping looked after children make a smooth transition to their next school or college. They should make sure that arrangements are in place to achieve speedy transfer of the looked after child's school records to a new school and that the local authority responsible for looking after the child has the most up-to-date version of the PEP.

Transfer out of care

When a child who is under a care order returns home their educational needs are unlikely to have changed significantly simply because they are no longer looked after. Although they will no longer be required to have a PEP, designated teachers will wish to give consideration to the implications of continuity for meeting the child's education needs.

Useful Links

Alison Pullen - Headteacher

Bedford Virtual School for Looked After Children

School Improvement Team

5th Floor Borough Hall

Cauldwell Street

Bedford MK42 9AP

Telephone 01234 228475 (Internal Extension 42475)

Links to other school policies and procedures:

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the school's

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- E Safety Policy
- Pastoral Care, Guidance and Support Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct for all Adults
- Equality Policy