



BEVERLEY SCHOOL FOR PUPILS WITH AUTISM

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

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BEVERLEY SCHOOL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Purpose

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children within Beverley School.

Rationale

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.

In UK law children in care are referred to as 'looked after children'. A child is 'looked after' if they are in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours. Legally, this could be when they are:

- living in accommodation provided by the local authority with the parents' agreement
- the subject of an interim or full care order or, in Scotland, a permanence order
- the subject of an emergency legal order to remove them from immediate danger
- in a secure children's home, secure training centre or young offender institution
- unaccompanied asylum seeking children

A child will stop being 'looked after' when they are either adopted, returned home or turn 18. The local authority will continue to support children leaving care at 18 until they reach 21.

The Children Act 1989

The 1989 Act places an obligation on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children. The authority must give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of a looked after child. (The duty to promote educational achievement does not apply to children receiving short breaks, as in those cases the responsibility rests with the parent (regulation 42). 'Looked after' is a legal term which applies to children who are in the care of the Local Authority (LA). There are two main types of looked after children:

- The child's parents may agree that the child goes into care or the child requests to go into care. This is often referred to as 'Section 20'.
- The child may be legally removed from their parents without the parents' consent. This is when the court has concluded that a child could be harmed if they stay at home. This is referred to as a 'Care Order or Section 31'.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to look after the child – this includes ensuring they receive the best education possible. The Local Authority assumes the

role of 'corporate parent'. This responsibility is held by every adult employed by the Local Authority including those who work in schools.

Introduction

Beverley School aims to promote the educational attainment, achievement and welfare of Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Jane May

The governing body is committed to providing a quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

Our designated teacher ensures...

- The educational achievement of each looked after child in school is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated, promoting a culture of high expectation.
- A PEP is implemented and the use of pupil premium is beneficial to the child. (Working under the guidance of the Virtual school)
- Appropriate advice is given to both teaching and non-teaching staff
- she acts as an advocate for children and young people in care.
- The young person has a voice in setting learning targets.
- There are systems for liaising with carers and social workers, and birth parents where appropriate.
- The needs of LAC are reflected in the School development Plan as appropriate
- Attendance is monitored and intervene to address this if it becomes a concern
- The transition for looked after children post-16, and also monitor progress of children if they leave care.
- Governors are kept up to date on the progress of LAC

Aims

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for looked after children as for all children
- ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide an appropriate curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that Looked After Children take as full a part as possible in school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of looked after students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that Looked After Children are involved, where possible, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC Policy reinforces the need for teaching and learning that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Looked After Children.

Allocation of Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for Looked After Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with Middlesbrough Virtual School for looked after children and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that looked after children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

This school assesses each Looked After Child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The social worker for the looked after child initiates a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of the student joining the school, or of entering care, and ensures that the young person is actively involved. Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP review meetings and provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, specialist teacher from Middlesbrough Virtual School (or other Virtual School, where the child is from another Local Authority) and other agencies.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher knows all the Looked After Children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Middlesbrough Virtual School specialist staff, teacher/support worker and social worker. The status of Looked After Children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available to all classroom teachers and relevant associate staff. LAC are identified as a vulnerable group when tracking, monitoring and reporting on attainment and progress.

Partnership with Parents/Carers and Care Workers

We believe in developing strong partnerships with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

Links with External Agencies/Organisations

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual Looked After Children.

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Virtual School for Looked After Children (Looked After Children in Education Team)
- Other Virtual Schools for looked after children from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- External Learning Providers

LAC Policy Review and Evaluation

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the impact of the looked after children policy and practice each year and report to the Governing Body.

The Virtual School, Middlesbrough

Key Principles

There are 4 main priorities for the Virtual School, Middlesbrough:

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress for looked after children (LAC) and young people across all key stages.
- Improve school attendance and reduce exclusion.
- Improve the quality of Personal Education Plans.
- Support school leadership to enhance a shared objective of improving life opportunities through education.

Roles

The service works across all key stages, in mainstream school, Pupil Referral Units, children's homes, and foster homes that have LAC needing extra support. Using a multi-agency approach, staff work closely with social workers, foster parents, designated teachers, the education psychology service and other relevant agencies.

The virtual school for looked after children:

1. Provides advocacy, support and advice on educational issues relating to LAC
2. Maintenance of the education database, including information on attendance and attainment
3. Offers training on, and dissemination of, information about the educational needs of LAC
4. Monitors the effectiveness of Personal Education Plans (PEPS)

5. Provides advocacy support for exclusions, admissions, appeals and child care reviews
6. Provides additional education packages to support individual need
7. Monitors the academic progress of all LAC

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PEP Process

The PEP (Personal Education Plan), which is mandatory for children aged between pre-school age and 18, is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked after children (LAC) to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations, and builds life chances.

The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the LA that looks after the child, and the school. Social workers, carers, Virtual School Heads, designated teachers, and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. Everyone involved in the PEP process at all stages should involve the child (according to their understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent and / or relevant family member.

Once a child goes into care, their educational needs should be assessed immediately. The PEP should set high expectations of rapid progress and put in place the additional support the child needs in order to succeed.

A good PEP will:

- Be written with wide audience in mind, most of whom will not be familiar with social work and education terminology. It may also be read in court as it is part of the child's care plan.
- Identify developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences.

- Set short and long-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate; the expectation is that children in care will make as good progress as their peers. Targets should be set with this in mind.
- Be a record of planned actions – e.g. homework, extra tuition, study support (including the date by which these should be done) – that the school and others will take to promote the educational achievements of the child based on an assessment of his or her educational needs.
- Include information on how the progress of the child is to be rigorously monitored.
- Record details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to make sure personal education targets are met, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 in relation to English and Mathematics, and at Key Stage 4 in achieving success in public examinations. In particular, one-to-one tuition appears to have a particularly significant impact on the progress of the key strategies for raising attainment.
- Say what will happen or is already happening to put in place any additional support which may be required – e.g. possible action to support special educational needs involving the SENCO, educational psychologist, CAMHS, or LA education services.
- Set out how a child's aspiration and self-confidence and ambition is being nurtured, especially in consideration of longer term goals towards further and higher education, work experience, and career plans.
- Include what the Pupil Premium for the child delivers.
- Be a record of the child's academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning activities (e.g. sporting, personal development, community).
- Provide information which helps all who are supporting the child's educational achievement to understand what works for him or her.
- Have clear accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen.

Virtual School PEP Champion

The delivery of high quality PEPs is a crucial priority of the Virtual School Middlesbrough. In Middlesbrough, a Virtual School Champion will arrange bi-annual, and in many cases, tri-annual Personal Education Plan meetings. When a young person's needs change or there has been a significant event in their life, Virtual School Middlesbrough will convene a PEP review meeting to ensure that the plan remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of LACYP.

VSM PEP Champions chair, and complete the PEP document, in conjunction with the young person's Social Worker, Carer, Designated Teacher and the young person themselves. VSM PEP Champions ensure that all statutory requirements of the PEP are met, give educational advice and guidance to Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Carers, signpost to other sectors and professionals where needed, guarantee that the young person's voice is heard and hold the school accountable for raising aspirations for LACYP.

It is important that the PEP is accurate, detailed, living and useful document, and it should be easily comprehensible to carers and any school that subsequently receives it.