

AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust

"Life - Transforming - Learning"

Policy Title:	Child Looked After Policy (formerly Looked After Children)
Responsibility:	Chief Executive Officer
Review Body:	Board of Trustees
Date:	September 2018
Review:	September 2019

Rationale

Educational establishments are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of children who are looked after, 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.

Therefore, Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the Trust) promotes the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. All Trust academies must have a policy for Children Looked After which sets out the approach to meeting the needs of such children and the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress. Consequently, all academies must adopt the policy as set out at Appendix 1.

Legal Framework

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term ‘in care’ now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘accommodated’ by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be ‘looked after children’ (LAC) or children in care or ‘children looked after’ (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person’s legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers;
- In a children’s home;
- In a residential school;
- With relatives, or
- Even with parents – under supervision of Children’s Services.

Similarly, an ‘accommodated’ child can be living:

- In foster care;
- In a children’s home, or

- In a residential school.

Following the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, schools and designated teachers also have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. Consequently, for the purposes of this policy the term 'children looked after' includes children previously looked after as defined by the Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its children looked after is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH). In the London Borough of Bromley, Helen Priest is the Virtual School Head.

POLICIES RELATING TO CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

1. This policy is one of a series in the Trust's integrated safeguarding and inclusion portfolio and should be read alongside both central Trust and individual academy policies. These include:

The Trust's policies on:

- Data Protection
- Equality
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding
- Safer Recruitment
- Special Educational Needs and Disability

Academies' individual policies on:

- Accessibility Plan
- Administration of medicine and first aid
- Attendance
- Appropriate physical contact including restraint
- Behaviour including anti-bullying
- Child Protection
- E-safety and acceptable use
- Health and safety procedures
- Missing children
- Personal and intimate care
- Photography of children and young people
- Pupil Premium
- SEND

2. Key roles are specified including the role of the designated teacher as detailed in the Child Looked After Policy at appendix 1 and as implemented by all Trust academies.

Academies must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all children looked after;
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all children looked after;
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all children looked after;

- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of children looked after;
- Develop systems of communications and protocols;
- Promote the attendance of looked children after;
- Ascertain who has parental responsibility for any child who is looked after;
- Ensure that pupils who have been previously looked after or are care leavers continue to be supported and monitored in relation to all the areas mentioned above.

Appendix 1

Policy Title:	Child Looked After Policy (formerly Looked After Children)
Responsibility:	Headteacher/ Executive Headteacher
Review Body:	Board of Trustees
Date:	June 2018
Review:	June 2019

Legal Framework

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.

Furthermore, the term “looked after”, which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term “in public care”, which has been adopted by the DfES in their publication, “The Education of Young People in Public Care”.

Following the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, schools and designated teachers also have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. Consequently, for the purposes of this policy the term ‘children looked after’ includes children previously looked after as defined by the Children and Social Work Act 2017

Objective

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of children looked after on the roll of the academy.

In support of this objective the academy will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each child who is looked after has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) 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 the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate;
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the local authority’s Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education/ Department of Health guidance on The Education Of Children And Young People In Public Care (Archived);

- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies;
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

Policies relating to Children Looked After

3. This policy is one of a series in the Trust's integrated safeguarding and inclusion portfolio and should be read alongside both central Trust and individual academy policies. These include:

The Trust's policies on:

- Child Looked After
- Data Protection
- Equality
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding
- Safer Recruitment
- Special Educational Needs and Disability

Academies' individual policies on:

- Accessibility Plan
- Administration of medicine and first aid
- Attendance
- Appropriate physical contact including restraint
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- Child Protection
- E-safety and acceptable use
- Health and safety procedures
- Missing children
- Personal and intimate care
- Photography of children and young people
- Pupil Premium
- SEND

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher (delete as appropriate) - The Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher (the Designated Teacher);
- ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training;
- oversee the implementation of the policy on children looked after;
- be responsible for all systems to support children looked after in order to achieve the objective;
- be aware of the following:
 - the number of pupils classified as children looked after in the academy;
 - an analysis of attainment and progress measures of pupils classified as children looked after as a discrete group, compared to other pupils and nationally;

- the attendance of pupils classified as children looked after, compared to other pupils;
- the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils;
- the destination of pupils classified as children looked after when leaving the school;
- the number of complaints;
- The Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher is accountable to the Trust for the achieving the objective and as such should be satisfied that the academies policies and procedures ensure pupils designated as children looked after have equal access to:
 - Full time educational provisions of at least 2 hours;
 - Public examinations;
 - Additional interventions to support educational progress;
 - Employment excellence career guidance [delete if not relevant];
 - Additional educational support;
 - Extra-curricular activities;
 - Work experiences [delete if not relevant];
 - The most effective use of Pupil Premium to raise attainment.

Designated Teacher - The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After at the academy is:

[insert name]

The Designated Teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding children looked after at the academy. He/she will serve as the contact for social services and other agencies and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support children looked after within the academy. This includes serving as an advocate for all children looked after in the academy.

The Designated Teacher's role will include:

- To maintain a register of children in public care and to have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after and maintaining records regarding children looked after;
- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated;
- To ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan or ePEP with SMART targets that will promote progress and to assist in co-ordinating the education and PEP meetings;
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the Personal Education Planning meeting;
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the pupil and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced;
- To work closely with the SENCO to ensure all children looked after with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children looked after and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;

- To ensure that members of staff who teach the children looked after on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the Personal Educational Planning meeting;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to the academy staff where relevant and carer(s), that this information is kept up to date and used on a need to know basis to help the pupil overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- To track and support the educational progress of all pupils who are looked-after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- To inform the planning and establish a system for the smooth transition of children looked after to and from the academy;
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan (PEP) are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant staff are aware of them;
- To support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after.
- To ensure that pupils who have been previously looked after or are care leavers continue to be supported and monitored in relation to all the areas mentioned above.
- To work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after. On commencement of

Working with Individual Children Looked After:

- To discuss 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;
- To enable the child looked after to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To ensure the child looked after has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues;
- To ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- To develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of children looked after and close the gap between them and their peers;
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

Liaison:

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on Child Protection Plans;
- To develop effective communication with Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan or ePEP is congruent with the pupil's Care Plan;

- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services and to ensure effective communication with all relevant parties;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school roll to the Virtual School as requested – progress and attainment data submitted each term.
- To maintain and respect confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

Training:

- To develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training events organised by Children's Services, the Virtual School or local Designated Teachers cluster groups;
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate so that they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children looked after and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements;
- To ensure that academy staff have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on learning;
- To have completed the iLearn on-line learning module/s specifically for Designated Teachers and to attend other training as appropriate;
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE or other research or policy.

[Teachers/ Faculty Leaders – delete as appropriate] – To ensure that the progress of pupils in public care are scrutinised and that ongoing progress is being made. Any concerns should be raised with the Designated Teacher as soon as possible.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

- The [Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher] and/or the Designated Teacher have responsibility for informing all teaching staff who are in contact with the child looked after of the care status;
- In the absence of the usual class teacher, the [Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher /Subject Leader – delete as appropriate] should make sure that any supply teacher is aware that there is a child in public care in their class. [Where the absence is known in advance, the teacher writing their cover lesson should indicate this status on the Cover register with any appropriate notes – include if appropriate];
- As the academy's administrative office will be the initial contact of carers and other agencies with the academy, the academy's office staff will have knowledge of the pupil's care status;
- It is appropriate for support staff to have knowledge that the pupil is being looked after when directly involved on the teaching of the pupil;
- Other staff may need to know if there are particular concerns that require a whole-school approach;

- In each case, the [Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher] and the Designated Teacher will determine the extent of the information shared. In every case, only information that is critical to the working relationship will be passed on.
- All processing and sharing of personal data of the child will be undertaken in accordance with data protection principles as detailed in the Trust's data protection policy

Admission

Children who are looked after are a priority for admission as detailed in the academy's published admission criteria.

[On admission, the pupil will meet with the Designated Teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the pupil is made to feel comfortable at our academy. Records will be requested from the pupil'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 pupil as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the pupil's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, the academy 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.) – suggested wording but academy to include the operational practice]

School Trips and Special Activities

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

Involvement with Parents and other Agencies

The academy recognises that support from home greatly assists a pupil's educational progress and aims to involve parents, carers and those with parental responsibility in an open and positive manner. The academy will maintain regular communication with the primary carer and will ensure that copies of reports are forwarded to the Social Worker in addition to the foster carer and parents as appropriate.

The academy recognises that multi-agency working is crucial to the support and progress of children in public care. The academy will work closely with other agencies involved in supporting the achievements and welfare of the pupil, particularly the social worker and will exchange significant information to appropriate personnel between reviews when necessary.

Complaints

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. Thereafter the academy's complaints policy must be followed.