

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL (WIMBORNE MINSTER)

Looked After Children Policy

Review:

Title of Policy	Looked After Children Policy
Review Cycle	Bi-Annually
Policy prepared by	Sally Dean , Assistant Headteacher
Committee responsible	Learning and Achievement
Date of review by committee	4 th July 2018
Date of approval or submission to FGB	17 th July 2018
Next Review	Under Review MDW - February 2023

1. Introduction and Purpose

Policy for Queen Elizabeth's School on Promoting and Supporting Education for Looked After Children

Who are our Looked After Children (LAC)?

The term 'looked after' was introduced by the Children's Act 1989. Children and young people become 'Looked After' either if they have been taken into Care by the Local Authority, or have been accommodated by the Local Authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or be placed back at home with their birth parent(s).

Queen Elizabeth's School is committed to providing quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. We recognise that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of Looked After Children, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the DfE Guidance 2009 and the Children and Young Persons Act (2008). The Children and Young Persons Act places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential".

2. Scope - This policy is applicable to all of Queen Elizabeth's School.

3. Legal Requirements.

- Children's Act 1989
- DfE Guidance 2009 and the Children and Young Persons Act (2008)

4. Policy Principles and Procedures

4.1 Principles

Queen Elizabeth's School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

4.2 Procedures

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 student to identify who should be aware of their care status. However, we do acknowledge that in some cases, this may not be possible

5. Responsibilities

At Queen Elizabeth's School we will:

- work alongside the Virtual School, social workers and other outside agencies to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan that provides support in conjunction with any other care provision 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 curriculum, careers guidance, extracurricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully;
- ensure that the Pupil Premium is used to improve academic achievement as well as the social and emotional development of the child;
- 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;
- endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their full academic potential.
- ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate;

The Headteacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher;
- 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;
- report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number and type of complaints received from a Local Authority with 'Duty of Care'.

The Designated Teacher will:

- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how looked after children learn;
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets;
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning;
- make sure that looked after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school;
- be an advocate for Looked After Children, ensuring that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to;
- ensure a smooth induction for student and carer/s (and parent/s where possible), note any specific requirements, including care status;

5. Responsibilities (Cont'd)

The Designated Teacher will (Cont'd):

- ensure entry to examinations for all Looked After Children;
- coordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff and governors receive relevant information and training;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning. The designated teacher will also recognise the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, Queen Elizabeth's School will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other students;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

Staff at Queen Elizabeth's School will:

- have high expectations of looked after children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children, but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- understand how important it is to see looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, virtual school heads (or equivalent) in local authorities and
- how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care of the individual;
- ensure entry to examinations for Looked After Children.
- be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulty.

5. Responsibilities (Cont'd)

The Governing Body at Queen Elizabeth's School will:

- ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions;
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body;
- for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned;
- review the effective implementation of this policy;
- ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - the National Curriculum and public examinations
 - additional educational support, where this is needed
 - extra-curricular activities
 - work experience and careers guidance

Links to other policies

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them:

- Oversubscription criteria
- The School Code of Conduct
- The Pupil Premium Policy

Success Criteria and Outcomes

As for all our pupils, Queen Elizabeth's is committed to helping every Looked After Child to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance when compared with their peers.

Appendix

