
Children Looked After Policy

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1. Introduction

The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of children looked after by a local authority, but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress.

Children Looked After (CLA) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Under-achievement in further and higher education

Who are our Looked After Children? 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
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- 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

The term '**in care**' refers only to children who are subject to a **care order** by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989. They may live with either...

- 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 'Children Looked After' (CLA). They may be looked after by our local authority, or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

The Governing Body of Frome College is committed to providing quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access 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 roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children" and "The Children and Young Persons Act 2008", the "Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulation 2009". Also, the guidance of "Improving the attainment of looked after young people in Secondary Schools". The

Children 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”.

The Improving Attainment Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of Local Authorities and schools to support looked after young people by setting out these principles:

1. Doing the things they do for all young people, but more so
2. Balancing high levels of support with real challenge
3. Skilfully linking each young person to a key person they relate well to
4. Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships
5. Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies
6. Making things happen and seeing things through
7. Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility
8. Actively extending the horizons of each young person
9. Planning for future transitions

The Guidance introduced two key measures:

- To ensure that a Designated Teacher is nominated in every school
- To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all CLA.

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that the Designated Teacher and staff at Frome College are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (“the 2008 Act”) places a duty on the Governing Body of maintained schools to designate a member of staff (the ‘Designated Teacher’) as having responsibility to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children who are registered pupils at the school. This includes those aged between 16 and 18. The Governing Body and all the staff at Frome College are committed to ensuring that all CLA achieve, are challenged, and enjoy school.

In doing so we all have key roles and responsibilities:

2.1 Parental Responsibility (PR)

PR for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

2.2 The Name of the Designated Teacher for Frome College is Mrs Victoria West.

She has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every Looked After Child on the school’s roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

- 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 (PEP) that will promote progress;
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the PEP meeting.

- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced.
- Promote a culture in which Looked After Children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'in care' and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them and allow them to achieve
- 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 PEP meeting;
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services and birth parents where appropriate;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school 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 student overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- 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 where relevant, transition for children looked after Post 16
- To ensure that the educational targets within the PEP are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant staff are aware of them
- To report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis on the outcomes for children looked after
- To attend relevant training as appropriate
- To ensure that school staff have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on learning;
- Make sure that Looked After Children are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and that they have access to academic focused study support;
- 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 Work 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 whilst ensuring confidentiality. Additional personal information to be shared on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student.
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- Promotes a culture in which Looked After Children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning. Thus ensuring that the Pupil Voice section of the PEP is completed.
- Promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers. In particular, they should make sure that carers understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new child looked after into the school. For further detail,

please see Appendix A (page 8).

- To develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of Looked After Children and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available e.g. from the Virtual School and other partner agencies :
- To develop effective communication with Children's Services staff so that the PEP is congruent with the child'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 ensure there is a named contact for colleagues in Children's Services;
- 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 keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE or other research or policy.

The designated person will report on:

- The number of CLA on roll and the confirmation that they have a PEP
- Their attendance compared to other students
- Their attainment compared to other students
- The number (if any) of fixed term and permanent exclusions
- The destinations of students who leave the school Good practice for all staff:

2.3 All staff have a responsibility to:

- 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, 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

2.4 Governing Body will:

- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA

- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for CLA. The appointment of a designated teacher in accordance with the Regulations is a core function of the governing body. The Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009 (the regulations) require that the person designated is:
 - A qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school (regulation 3(2)), or a head teacher/acting head teacher of the school (regulation 3(3))
- Nominate a Governor with responsibility for CLA who liaises with the Head teacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of CLA are met

The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After in the school:

- The role of that Governor is to report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the reports from the Designated Teacher as source information:
 - The number of looked-after pupils in the school;
 - A comparison of progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
 - A comparison of attainment measures as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
 - The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
 - The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
 - Pupil destinations after leaving school

The named Governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:

- Full time educational provision – at least 25 hours;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress, e.g. 1:1 tuition
- Employment Excellence careers guidance;
- Additional education support;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Work experience;
- The most effective use of the Pupil Premium to raise attainment
- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises CLA according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give CLA equal access in respect of: admission to school; National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational; out of school learning and extra-curricular activities ; work experience and careers guidance.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of CLA

2.5 Good practice suggests that the Local Authority will:

- Lead on the drive to improve educational and social care standards for CLA
- Ensure that the education of this group is as good as that provided for every other student
- Ensure that CLA receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every CLA has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care
- Make sure that every CLA has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for CLA and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training

- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate Guidelines set out in “The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Looked After Children” and “Improving the attainment of looked after young people in Secondary Schools” also form part of this policy and will be adhered to.

Appendix A

A1. Frome College admission and support of Looked After Children

A Looked After Child will have a different admission process to other students, either at the point of transition or as an in year joiner.

A2. Initial meeting

This meeting will be an information gathering meeting.

Invited to this meeting will be,

- Social Worker
- Carer(s)
- Student
- Designated Teacher
- SENCO
- Virtual school representative
- Any other support agencies

The purpose of this meeting is to gather as much relevant information as possible around the student's family and educational history.

Outcomes from this meeting :

- Place the student in the most appropriate House
- Draft a pen portrait to share with staff
- Desired curriculum outcome. This will involve positive discrimination
- Any additional needs already identified or testing that needs to be put in place
- Knowledge of which authority is placing the child and their support and process.
- Request to previous schools for information that has not already been supplied. This may involve several schools as most recent may not have all the information
- Date for follow up meeting ASAP

A3. Follow up meeting

This meeting will ideally be the first PEP.

Information required for this meeting:

- Tutor Group
- Tutor
- Students timetable
- A list of students who will be friends for the student
- Extra-curricular opportunities including homework club
- Results of any tests completed and or dates of tests still required

Invited to this meeting will be:

- Social Worker
- Carer(s)
- Student
- Designated Teacher
- Head of House
- SENCO

- Virtual school representative
- Any other support agencies

Outcomes from this meeting:

- Agreed curriculum timetable
- Agreed support timetable, including 1:1 mentoring
- Agreed Pen Portrait to be shared with all staff
- Agreed any extra information to be shared with specific staff
- A list of any additional resources that the student may need and the sourcing of these.
- Agreed who is the point of contact for the carer(s) and student in school
- Agreed who the school is to contact with any relevant information
- Agreed when and who in school will attend review meetings / PEP most likely to be Head of House

A4. Tracking of Looked After Children

All looked after children should be offered and or complete:

- ELSA
- 1:1 Mentoring
- CAT Testing
- Lucid Testing - Spelling / Reading / Comprehension
- Accelerated reader
- Success maker
- Revision guides (this may include support material from KS2, where appropriate)

Heads of House need to ensure:

- Regular monitoring, including attendance and behaviour / achievement points
- Regular contact with student and carer at least once a half term
- Positively discriminate in all aspects of school life eg school trips, house councils
- First point of contact and distribute relevant information