

SWALE ACADEMIES TRUST

Policy on EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing, in line with Every Child Matters.

Helping Looked After Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Kent County Council and Kent schools. This policy takes account of:

- The County Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children)(England) Regulations 2006
- Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (DfE 2009)

The approach of the Trust 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.
- Limiting exclusions whenever fair and reasonable and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals and encouraging them to take action to support, whether the LAC is Kent based or 'out of county.'

Implications

As for all our pupils/students, the Trust 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 their achievements on a value added basis, attainment, their attendance and exclusions.

The Trust is committed to providing quality education for all pupils/students and will:

- Ensure Looked After Children are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children)(England) Regulations 2006.
- Ensure a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for every Looked After Child, in line with Kent's guidance on Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children. The PEP is to be initiated by Social Services responsible for the child but Kent PEP documentation will be used for Kent and Out of Local Authority Looked After Children. to be initiated by the child's social worker or department or according to the requirements of other Local Authorities for their Looked After Children.

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- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for Looked After Children.

The Trust will champion the needs of Looked After Children, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Adopted by Directors July 2012/v02

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Looked After Children Policy Attachments

Responsibilities of the Headteacher:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or be absent for more than the immediate short term..
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children. OfSTED now select a number of Looked After Children, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Local Authority Virtual Headteachers or Children in Care Managers should be provided with information on the attendance and attainment of Looked After Children placed at Westlands.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body:

- Identify a nominated Governor for Looked After Children.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children. ▪ Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

Procedures: the Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of Looked After Children, through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure that Looked After Children are given priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria if it will not prejudice the efficient use of resources.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Looked After Children achieve and enjoy their time at the school; by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them, except as a last resort, if that will not render an unfair situation in comparison with nonLooked After pupils.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met. ▪ Receive a report once a year setting out:
 1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 3. Their Year 9 English, maths and science scores, GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 5. The destination of pupils who leave the school, where known.
 6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

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The Role of the Designated Teacher

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen ...[who] should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectation for them.”

Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for LAC. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team or have a clear referral route to it. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through the Local Authority Looked After Children Education Adviser Team.

Governors should also be aware that OfSTED will focus on Looked After Children, monitoring how the school has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

The Designated Teacher will endeavour to:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child’s social worker. This will be through the Learning Leader and Community for transfers at 11.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the foster carer and the social worker (if available) at a time to correspond with the Care Plan review.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff to whom they can talk.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage Looked After Children to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning through the school’s Community structure.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Facilitate timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion through the school’s Community structure.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Ensure that the audit on attendance and numbers is returned to the LAC Education Adviser every term.

The Responsibilities of all Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children’s confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher’s requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.

The Staff Development Co-ordinator will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

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