

# HASSENBROOK SCHOOL Specialist Technology College



## **POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

## HASSENBROOK SCHOOL

### Policy for Looked After Children

**Hassenbrook School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of students in public care.**

**Designated Teacher For LAC – Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral/Inclusion with Senior Pastoral Support Manager**

**Governor with responsibility for LAC – Ms Johanne Hayes**

Looked After Children – LAC - 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 and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with 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
- underachievement in further and higher education.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. 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 well being, in line with Every Child Matters

This policy takes account of:

The 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*).

Our 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 students.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

### **Who are Looked After Children?**

Children become 'Looked After' if they have been taken into care by the Local Authority and have been accommodated by the Local Authority. Most Looked After Children (LAC) live in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home or living with a relative or parents on a part-time or full-time basis.

Children become Looked After if they become accommodated under the following sections of the Children Act.

- Section 20 of the Children Act; this is where the Local Authority (LA) provides accommodation for a child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility
- Section 31 of the children act where a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote the child's welfare.
- Section 38 of the children act where children are subject to an interim care order.
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- 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 (section 21).

### **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

All looked after children must have a care plan in place. It looks at objectives for the child and identifies what support they need. This must include a health plan and a PEP. The designated teacher has responsibility for working with the local authority to create and maintain the PEP.

#### **PEP process**

- Identify a date for the meeting for a PEP in consultation with the Named Social Worker for the Child.
- Designated Teacher can invite other participants following consultation with the Named Social Worker.
- Designated Teacher to ensure PEP Meeting is complete and sent to PEP co-ordinator within 14 days of the child starting the school.

## **Statutory requirements for the completion of a PEP**

- The Personal Education plan (PEP) is a record of what needs to happen for Looked After Children to enable them to reach their full potential. It reflects any existing education plans and should also reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning.
- Every Looked After Child in an education setting aged 3 years to 16 years of age must have a PEP.
- The Looked After Child's social worker should ensure that where a child is placed in an emergency the PEP is initiated within 14 working days of the child becoming looked after.
- The child or young person's first PEP should be completed in time for the first statutory care review within 28 days. Then reviewed at the 3 month and 6 month care reviews, then 6 monthly after this. This may need to be increased if necessary and if a child moves foster care placement and school.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body will ensure a suitable designated teacher for looked after pupils is in place and will consider reports from him/her annually.

Governors will also:

- Make sure the designated teacher is a member of teaching staff with the right levels of seniority, experience and status to provide leadership, training and advice to others.
- Work with the head teacher to make sure the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to respond to the teaching and learning needs of looked after children.
- Maintain an oversight of how well the role is working and monitor the progress of students in care
- Receive a report annually from the designated teacher to include:
  - Any workload issues arising as a result of the number of children looked after on the role. -
  - Levels of progress made by looked after children in relation to all children (including educational, social and emotional progress).
  - Whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked after children is different to that of all children.
  - Any process or planning issues arising from Personal Education Plans.
  - Whether any looked after children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met.
  - Whether any have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being met
  - How the teaching and learning needs of looked after children are reflected in school development plans and are being met.
  - What training the designated teacher has had to enable them to impart knowledge and understanding about the education and well-being of looked after children to other staff.
  - The impact of any of the school's policies (e.g. on charging for educational visits or extended school activity) on looked after children.

The report will not mention children by name, to protect their confidentiality.

**All staff should:-**

- Have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievements of LAC.
- Positively promote the raising of LAC's self-esteem.
- Ensure that any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Ensure all LAC have access to educational examinations such as SATS and GCSEs.
- Respond to requests by the co-ordinator for information to support PEP's and Reviews
- Liaise with the designated teacher when LAC is experiencing difficulties.
- Monitor attendance carefully and involve Designated Teacher for LAC and Attendance Manager if there are problems.
- Liaise with Designated Teacher LAC if any LAC is experiencing emotional, social or behavioural difficulties at school or at home.

**The role of the Designated Teacher**

- Together; with the Senior Pastoral Support Manager to act as the named contact with outside agencies.
- Build positive home-school relationships with regular opportunities for communication and dialogue.
- Be an advocate for all LAC.
- Monitor their educational progress with collaboration of their teachers and feed this information back to the relevant agencies.
- Ensure all LAC have a PEP and it is completed within 14 days of entering the school and/of entering the care system.
- Keeping PEP records up to date.
- Be responsible for sending on records should a LAC leave the school.
- Actively encourage opportunities for LAC to take part in extra-curricular activities.
- Monitor attendance for LAC and involve the Carer and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) at an early opportunity if there are problems with attendance.
- Ensure information is shared on a 'need to know' basis only.
- Attend training for LAC.
- Ensure all staff receives appropriate training and are aware of the educational difficulties and disadvantages faced by LAC.
- Provide regular reports to the Governing Body regarding LAC in the school and keep them updated on recent policy and practice.
- Act as a key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC.
- To support staff who may find some of the behaviours that some of these children may exhibit – this links in with staff well being.

## **The role of the LAC Governor**

The named Governor should:

- Be aware that the school has a LAC policy.
- Review the implementation of the school LAC policy
- Ensure all governors are made aware of the legal requirements for LAC
- Ensure there is a designated teacher for LAC.
- Ensure school policies and procedures are reviewed each year.
- Ensure LAC have equal access to Education and entry to public examinations the same as every other child
- Ensure LAC have priority admission to the school in line with guidance
- Receive regular reports from the designated teacher on the following:
  1. The number of LAC on roll and confirmation that they have a PEP
  2. Their attendance compared to other children
  3. Their attainment compared to other pupils.
  4. The number of fixed term exclusions (If any)
  5. The destinations of pupils who leave school

The Nominated Governor will commit to attending training to keep their knowledge and understanding up-to-date, to identifying the training needs of the governing body in relation to looked after children and to encouraging attendance on training programmes.

## **Procedures for Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy is monitored continually and reviewed every two years in response to such factors as:

- changes in the legislative framework;
- changing local social and demographic needs and circumstances;
- changes in school personnel;

This policy supports and should be read in conjunction with the school's Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality Policies, Additional Educational Needs Policy and the Admissions Policy.

Date Policy adopted by Governing Body March 2011

Review date March 2013