



Children in Public Care Policy

November 2013

Children in Public Care Policy (formerly Looked After Children

Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust Children in Public Care Policy (formerly Looked After Children)

STATUS:	Statutory
PURPOSE:	To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked-after children and young people
PRIMARY SOURCES:	DfEE/DH/National Children's Bureau Guidance for the Education of Young People in Public Care Looked After Children Guidance – the National Society, January 2012

DATE OF ISSUE:

REVIEW DATE:

1. Introduction

The Lincoln Multi Academy Trust recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in public care, when compared with their peers and is committed to implementing the principles and practice as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000, DfEE/DoH Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care 2000.

The DfEE/DoH guidance introduced two key measures in order to improve

- a) multi-agency co-ordination,
- b) educational achievement of children in public care.

They were:

- The appointment of a designated teacher in every school/academy for Looked After Children, and
- Each child in public care to have a Personal Education Plan.

The Trust, and the Local Governing Board is committed to ensuring that the designated teacher and whole staff group are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he / she is being looked-after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information is that of the Principal and / or the Co-ordinator for Looked-After Children. It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is being looked-after only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing will be determined by the Principal or the Co-ordinator for Looked-After Children.

2. Admission Arrangements

Children in Public Care Policy (formerly Looked After Children

As an Academy we give first priority in our oversubscription criteria to all relevant looked after children and previously looked after children whether or not they are Anglicans and shall in any event

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On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school/academy and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school/academy induction will take place.

3. Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

The Designated Teacher for children in public care should be a senior member of staff with sufficient authority to influence school/academy policy and practice. The named teacher in this academy is(insert name).

The Designated Teacher will:

- ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'looked-after' and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are looked-after, and to promote the involvement of these children in homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school/academy councils, etc;
- be an advocate to all children in this school/academy who are in public care;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, the Social Services Department (SSD) and the Education Service of the relevant Education Authorities;
- respond to the social worker initiating the Personal Education Plan (PEP) by ensuring the drawing together of the required information, co-ordinating the plan's delivery and monitoring and reviewing its effectiveness;
- ensure the child, carer/s, social worker and other relevant parties receive early notification of school/academy based meetings, parents evening and other events and that communication, both written and verbal, remains regular and positive;
- monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked-after in order to inform the school/academy's development plan;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- co-ordinate support for individual children in school/academy and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- inform the responsible social worker of any major decisions affecting the child;

Children in Public Care Policy (formerly Looked After Children

- inform the responsible social worker when a child in public care is absent from school/academy without notification;
- inform the carer/social worker and the LA of any fixed term or permanent exclusions;
- promote the involvement of children in public care in school/academy clubs and extra-curricular activities;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school/academy or internal truancy; and
- attend relevant training and cascade to school/academy staff, where appropriate.

Work with individual Looked-After Children

- to work with individual children, possibly through a carer, to arrive at a statement about their circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- to enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- to help ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan. (NB the PEP should be initiated by the child's social worker);
- to ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the social worker; and
- to supervise the smooth induction of a new looked-after child into the school/academy.

Liaison

- to liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register;
- to help co-ordinate education and SSD review meetings, so that the Personal Educational Plan can inform the child's Care Plan;
- to attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to SSD's care planning meetings;
- to be the named contact for colleagues in Education and SSD; and
- to ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies and individuals, and report on the progress of all looked-after children to Education Access.

Training

- to develop knowledge of SSD / Education procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority; and
- to cascade training to school/academy staff as appropriate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff

The academy staff will:

Children in Public Care Policy (formerly Looked After Children

- ensure any child in public care is sensitively supported and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the DfEE/DoH Guidance on Children and Young People in Public Care and have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievements of children in public care
- respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of Personal Education Plans and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- contribute to the designated teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate; and
- provide a supportive climate in school/academy, enabling children in public care to achieve stability.

5. Role of the Designated Governor for Looked After Children

The designated member of the Local Governing Board at this Academy for Looked After Children is:
_____ (insert name)

The named governor will report to the Local Governing Board on an annual basis:

- the number of looked-after pupils in the school/academy;
- a comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils;
- the attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- the level of fixed term / permanent exclusions; and
- pupil destinations.

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

- the National Curriculum;
- public examinations;
- additional educational support;
- extra-curricular activities; and

6. Supporting the Young Person in Care

Involving the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school/academy, the social worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child/young person for situations when they may be asked about home, eg. by other pupils in the playground.

Communication with Other Agencies

Children in Public Care Policy (formerly Looked After Children

The academy should ensure that a copy of all reports (eg, end of year reports) should be forwarded to the child's social worker in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker. The school/academy, the Education Service and the Social Services Department should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, eg. to have an Annual Review of a Statement combined with a Statutory Care Review.

Social Services, the Education Service and academy will need to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the child's circumstances, eg. if the academy is considering exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each looked-after child will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that the Social Worker takes a lead in developing. This will identify specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. Areas for consideration will include:

- attendance;
- achievement record (academic or otherwise);
- behaviour;
- homework;
- involvement in extra-curricular activities;
- special needs (if any);
- development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).

The PEP will be updated at least every six months, as part of the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Social Services Department.

The named governor will report annually to the Local Governing Board on the progress of all looked-after children against the key indicators outlined above.