

Children Looked After Policy

Approval Date – March 2016

Review Date – March 2019

Westfield Academy provides a co-ordinated approach for the education of Children looked after

Rationale

Children looked after (CLA) are young people of statutory school age who reside in short or long term care (Foster Care/Residential Care). CLA have the same access to education as other students which is appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the national curriculum.

Every effort has been made to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience to ensure that the child or young person is fully included within the school setting. Staff at school share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals, but especially with the young person themselves. Adults in school are sensitive to the child's wishes over what is known, and by whom, regarding their child in care status.

Designated teachers for CLA are responsible for planning and meeting the young person's educational and social needs in each school house. The designated teacher for CLA is the Assistant Principal (Learning & Teaching).

This policy ensures that all staff in our school are clear about the actions necessary with regards to CLA. Our aim is to raise awareness and ensure effective communication between all staff when teaching or supporting CLA.

Roles and responsibilities

1.1. The Governing Body will:

- Establish this policy, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, staff and parents, and keep it under regular review (Student Matters Committee).
- Ensure that the policy is non-discriminatory and is communicated clearly to students and parents/carers.
- Review the effectiveness of policy and practice.

1.2. Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for CLA. This responsibility is delegated to the Assistant Principal – Learning & Teaching (Mrs J Strange) and the Inclusion Leader (Mrs J Coles).

1.3. Designated Teacher for Children Looked After – Assistant Principal (Learning & Teaching)

- Communicate immediately and effectively with the carers, natural parents (as appropriate), and social workers of CLA.
- Develop clear professional relationships with carers, natural parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.
- Ensure that the child or young person has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and that it is regularly reviewed every term.
- Identify any special educational needs in consultation with the SENCO and ensure appropriate provision is made. If the child or young person has a statement of special educational needs, then the annual review coincides with a planned Child looked After review (CLA Reviews).

- To attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on his/her behalf (Inclusion Leader or Head of House).
- Maintain records of case conferences and other sensitive information in a secure confidential file and to disseminate information about the child only on a 'need to know basis'.
- Ensure that educational, care and health information is up to date and fully maintained in the child or young person's school file.
- Ensure that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school, and between the school and outside agencies, so that high educational expectations are maintained.
- Liaise with all teachers within the school and make sure that they are aware of the needs of CLA, actively promoting the child's best interests.
- Keep up to date with current practice by participating in relevant training opportunities.

1.4 Heads of House

- Ensure school records are up to date with current names and addresses of carers, natural parents and social workers.
- Be aware of, and sensitive to, the appropriate role of the natural parents.
- Oversee records of educational performance and attainment.
- Ensure the young person has the opportunity to participate fully in educational planning and decision making (via completion of the PEP).
- Oversee the day to day welfare of the young person and ensure that they have a trusted adult in school who is able to take time to listen to them. Refer to internal agencies as appropriate (e.g. SEN and/or Inclusion Team etc).
- Report appropriate statistical information, held by the school, upon request from the designated teacher for CLA.
- Deputise for designated teacher for CLA or the Inclusion Leader at meetings or conferences.

1.5 Class Teachers and other adults

- Knowledge of who on the school staff has responsibility for CLA –Inclusion Leader and Assistant Principal (Learning & Teaching).
- Immediately discuss an issue or concern relating to CLA with the designated teacher or Inclusion Leader, giving it the highest priority.
- Have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- Inform the Attendance Officer immediately of any absence concerns. Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure is established by the Attendance Officer.
- Instil confidence, self esteem and a sense of belonging in the student according to ABC principles.
- Be aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem. Refer concerns directly to Assistant Principal (Learning & Teaching), Inclusion Leader, HOH or SENCO.
- Acknowledge possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.
- Provide a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis.

Related Documents

Appendices

1. PEP Flow chart
2. Links to Somerset County Council PEP Guidance

This policy should also be read in conjunction with all other school safeguarding policies, but in particular the **Child Protection Policy and Procedures**.

Monitoring

This policy and its implementation will be monitored by the Assistant Principal (Learning & Teaching), the Inclusion Leader and the Governors' Student Matters Committee with responsibility for Safeguarding.

THE PEP REVIEW PROCESS FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Social Worker contacts Designated Teacher at the school to arrange date for PEP and agrees who each person is going to invite. The meeting should include the Designated Teacher (or representative), the Social Worker, and the carer.

Social Worker completes their sections (1a, 4 and where possible 2a/b and 3) of PEP form & emails to Designated Teacher 5 working days before meeting

Designated Teacher completes sections 5, 6 and 7, and if it is not appropriate for the child to attend the meeting, also section 9 (My Views)

PEP meeting held and the PEP completed in full, including planned use of the PEP funding to support PEP targets and raise achievement

Designated Teacher transfers the information gathered at the meeting to the electronic PEP and distributes to all parties

Social worker refers to the Somerset PEP within the Protocol PEP recording as 'completed' immediately after the meeting

A copy of the Somerset PEP is emailed within 10 working days to CICEnquiries@somerset.gov.uk by the **designated teacher** for central logging and monitoring purposes

Social worker ensures IRO receives PEP prior to Child in Care Review

Once the Somerset PEP is logged on CapitaONE database, the Funding for Children from Vulnerable Groups is triggered for eligible children. This is released directly to education settings. For more information contact CICEnquiries@somerset.gov.uk

