Westfield Academy

Seeing the qualities in every child

Looked After (and previously looked after) Children Policy

Approval Date – February 2026 Review Date – February 2027

Westfield Academy provides a coordinated approach for the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Rationale

Looked-after children (LAC) are young people of statutory school age who reside in short- or long-term care (foster care/residential care) and previously looked-after children are those who are no longer looked after because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. LAC (and previously LAC) 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.

We aim 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 looked after child status.

Designated teachers for LAC (and previously LAC) are responsible for planning and meeting the young person's educational and social needs in each school year. The designated teacher for LAC is the Deputy Headteacher. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Assistant to the designated teacher.

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

The roles and responsibilities as set out in this policy refer to both looked-after and previously looked-after children with the exception of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and are dependent on families informing the school of previously looked-after status.

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 Learning 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. Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for LAC. This responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead .

1.3. Designated Teacher for Looked After Children – Deputy Headteacher

- Tasks may be delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the assistant.
- Communicate immediately and effectively with the carers, birth parents (as appropriate), and social workers of LAC.
- Develop clear professional relationships with carers, birth 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 and ensure appropriate provision is made. If the child or young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan then the annual review coincides with a planned PEP if required.
- To attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on her/his behalf (Designated Safeguarding lead or Head of Year).
- 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 LAC, actively promoting the child's best interests.
- Keep up to date with current practice by participating in relevant training opportunities.
- For previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

1.4 Heads of Year

- Ensure school records are up to date with current names and addresses of carers, birth parents and social workers.
- Be aware of, and sensitive to, the appropriate role of the birth 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.
- Report appropriate statistical information, held by the school, upon request from the designated teacher for LAC.

1.5 Class Teachers and other adults

- Knowledge of who on the school staff has responsibility for LAC – Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Immediately discuss an issue or concern relating to LAC with the Designated Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead, 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
- 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 Deputy Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head of Year.
- 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

Department for Education: The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Statutory Guidance on their roles and responsibilities. Updated February 2018
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children

This policy should also be read in conjunction with all other school safeguarding policies, but in particular the **Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy**
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Monitoring

This policy and its implementation will be monitored by the Deputy Headteacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Governors' Student Matters Committee with responsibility for Safeguarding.

Responsible

- Deputy Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead