

Leasowes High School
Kent Road
Halesowen
West Midlands
B62 8PJ
T: 01384 816285
F: 01384 816286
info@leasowes.dudley.sch.uk
www.leasowes.dudley.sch.uk



Looked After Children Policy

Department Owner:	C McAleavy
Author:	
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All school policies embody the commitment of Governors and Staff to the principles of:

- Equality of opportunity,
- Student and staff wellbeing, both mental and physical
- Striving for excellence in all that we do
- Transparency and accountability

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY January 2019

Associate Senior Leader – C.McAleavy

Policy for the Education of Looked After Children

Leasowes is committed to providing a high-quality education for all students including LAC. We recognise that more vulnerable students, including LAC may need access to additional support, mentoring and advocacy to enable equality of access, opportunity and success. We

are committed to providing an inclusive ethos in an atmosphere of mutual respect, where all students' needs are identified, understood and responded to sensitively and effectively.

Looked After Children 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. 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.
- Difficulties in sustaining relationships with others

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- Underachievement in further and higher education.
- Lack of interest or aspirations

These issues may also affect adopted young people

Who are Looked After Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subject 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)
- The term “in care” refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are “accommodated” by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be “Looked After Children” - LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Personal Education Plan (PEPs)

Personal Education Plans for LAC are statutory planning meetings which should occur within 20 school days of a child becoming looked after and be reviewed each term. PEPs are significant vehicles for celebrating the achievements of young people and effecting change. PEPs can be recorded electronically (e-PEP) so that they can be accessed by all relevant stakeholders online. This is a secure process which only the Designated teacher, delegated Social worker and the Looked After Children Education Services (LACES)/Virtual School can access. The PEP states what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. Education targets and strategies produced through the PEP should be shared with relevant teaching staff. This is especially important if issues have arisen regarding classwork, homework or behaviour in certain lessons.

The young person should be involved in the PEP. Where a young person does not wish to attend, the meeting should nevertheless take place, and they should be encouraged to comment on their education and progress through the relevant section of the PEP.

Pupil Premium Plus

Additional funding for LAC is granted to schools to help target barriers to learning and close the attainment gap between students. This grant is managed by the Virtual School (LACES) and used to improve outcomes and “narrow the gap” as identified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the Designated Teacher for the school. How the funding is spent will be discussed during the child’s Personal Education Planning meeting but must be used efficiently and effectively. The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this funding to support one-to-one tuition, extra-curricular activities (including financial support for school trips), revision guides for KS4 pupils and individualised needs (as assessed through the PEP). Accurate records of pupil premium expenditure are maintained by the Finance Manager.

Role and responsibility of LAC Designated Teacher

Ms Claire McAleavy, Senior Associate Leader is the Designated teacher for Looked After Children, she should:

- Keep and update a list of LAC students in the school (ongoing)
- Ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the student and carer, and note any specific requirements, including Special Educational Needs and care status
- Ensure that all LAC who have an identified delay/gap in their learning due to significant periods of absence from school have their needs met at the earliest opportunity (SENCO involvement)
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEND. Make EHCP requests and carry out EHCP reviews, as appropriate

- Ensure that each term a Personal Educational Plan (PEP) or e-PEP is produced in conjunction with the social worker, carer, student and appropriate stakeholders
- Allocate the 'Pupil Premium' per term, ensure the student is given every opportunity and support with this funding. Record details on the PEP/e-PEP
- Keep PEPs/e-PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings (maybe 3 or 6 monthly intervals or as need arises)
- Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the student's wishes and may not necessarily be Ms McAleavy, the Designated Teacher)
- Co-ordinate support and information sharing for the student within school and liaise other professionals, including the Educational Support Service and carers as necessary
- Identify how the Pastoral Team can support LAC, through additional CPD on trauma, loss and separation
- Maintain an overview of changing needs and progress of LAC
- Be an advocate for LAC
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC.
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events.
- Actively encourage and promote one-to-one tuition and extra-curricular activities for LAC.
- Liaise with relevant staff to review the progress of LAC through intervention or withdrawal sessions
- Inform/meet with Educational Support Service and other relevant agencies where there are concerns regarding progress, attendance, exclusions or other difficulties
- Ensure staff receive relevant information
- Ensure confidentiality for individual students and only share personal information on a need to know basis
- When a LAC is involved in a planned move to another school, ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, relevant agencies and receiving school, including updating the PEP/e-PEP
- Encourage LAC to attend and express their views at the LAC and PEP reviews
- Attend designated LAC Coordinators Network and Training Sessions
- Celebrate the success of LAC – complete the annual nominations for LAC Celebration Evening (May/June) and attend the Celebration Evening (October) each year or send a representative from the school
- Contribute to the school planning for LAC through the School Improvement Plan
- Ensure weekly attendance returns to each of the Welfare call providers engaged by LACES
- Make early contact with parents/carers/Social worker over attendance and punctuality
- Support Carers in helping their LAC at home
- Report to Governors each term with updates on academic progress, attendance and behaviour

Roles and responsibilities of all staff

- Ensure that any student in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the Guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for written or verbal information, including information on educational attainment and general well-being to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings and attend LAC review and Core Group Meeting reviews as appropriate
- Respond positively to a LAC's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary
- Be sensitive to a LAC's background and the issues surrounding being "Looked After" when addressing certain curriculum areas/research topics e.g. family trees, Mother's Day, inviting parents/carers to Parents Evening and similar areas
- Provide a supportive, emotionally intelligent climate to enable a LAC to achieve stability within the school setting
- As with all students, have high aspirations and expectations for the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children
- Positively promote the self-esteem of LAC
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure LAC participate in school's Gifted and Talented programme where appropriate
- Keep Ms McAleavy informed of any concerns, underachievement, identified barriers to learning to be included as part of the PEP review or to initiate a discussion with carers/parents/outside agencies

Roles and responsibilities of the Governing body

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (November 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC.

The Designated Governor is Mrs Jan Lees

The governing body at Leasowes High School will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for LAC

- Ensure that there is a named Designated teacher for LAC with sufficient time to discharge this role
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of LAC are met
- Be aware of how many children are designated as Looked After, their ages and any additional needs they might have
- Ensure all LAC have a PEP/e-PEP and IEP where appropriate, with appropriate targets, monitoring and evaluation of progress, attendance and behaviour
- Continue the policy of not excluding any student (especially a LAC) until all support and advisory channels have been exhausted
- Ensure that all LAC take part in trips, activities and over-night visits alongside their peers, making additional provision where necessary to ensure their participation
- Nominate a governor who links with the designated teacher, receives regular reports which provides feedback to the governing body

Policy date: January 2019 Review Date: January 2020 Assistant Headteacher: C.McAleavy