

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL



Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

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| The Children's Hospital School at Great Ormond Street & UCH | | |
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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Admissions | 4 |
| Record Keeping | 4 |
| Partnership with parents/carers and care workers | 4 |
| Looked After Children policy review and evaluation | 5 |
| Roles & Responsibilities | 5 |
| The Designated Teacher | 6 |
| Report to Governors | 6 |
| All school staff | 7 |
| The Governing Body | 7 |
| Personal Education Plan (PEP) | 8 |

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Introduction

The Children's Hospital School at Great Ormond Street and UCH seeks to minimise the interruption and disruption to all children and young people's education due to their medical needs and positively advocates for Looked After Children, previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers (i.e. children aged 16-17 who are no longer LAC)

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Madeline Bond

The Governors with responsibility for Looked After Children are Sucharita Sethi at GOSH and Jo Begent at UCH.

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its students 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" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on "Promoting the education of the Looked After Children" (July 2014).

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. Looked After Children fall in to 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 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).

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'**.

They may be Looked After by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Admissions

Looked After Children are a priority for admission and as such, we follow the DfE admissions Code of Practice.

Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- The school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for Looked After Children, previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We may offer additional resources and support if appropriate, to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances
- Pupil premium plus funding, if received, is appropriately used and shows an impact on the Looked after Children.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know of all the Looked After children, previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker (as appropriate).

The school flags Looked After Children status and previously Looked After Children status on the school's database and within a list on EPIC, the hospital's database. Information is kept confidentially and shared on a need to know basis and with sensitivity.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At the Children's Hospital School we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their potential.

We communicate regularly; often on a daily basis with parents, foster parents and carers. Review meetings are an additional opportunity to work in partnership together.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that hospital staff and external support services make in supporting Looked After Children and work with many agencies including:

- The Child's Virtual School.
- The Child's home school
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services.
- Medical officers/designated nurses.
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers.
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker.
- Social workers, play specialists, clinical staff and psychologists within the hospital

Looked After Children policy review and evaluation

We undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review will inform the School Improvement Plan.

Roles & Responsibilities

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children, previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when they are compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.
- Difficulties around attachment.

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- Underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people and previously Looked After Children.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of Looked After Children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

The Designated Teacher

For Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers, the designated teacher will:

- Have high expectations of learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- Attend relevant training to develop awareness of issues associated with these children and young people and disseminate information to staff.
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers seeking advice from the Virtual School team when appropriate.
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion. This includes contacting the Child's Virtual School.
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on relevant issues
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when child or young person transfers to another educational placement.
- Contribute information to Looked After Children reviews when required.
- Report to the Governing Body to inform of relevant policy and practice development. (see All School Staff below)
- Ensure carers are actively involved in any relevant school meetings and decisions about the child's education.
- Ensure that the children and young people are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision and next steps in learning.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Educational Health Care Plan. Looked After Children are nine times more likely to have an Education Health and Care Plan than the general school population. (DfE, 2020)

Report to Governors

An annual report includes:

- The number of Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children during the academic year.
- The confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) including the use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus if received.
- The children's attendance.

- Their progress in relation to their targets.

All school staff

All school staff will:

- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress and developments.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.
- Seek to raise the self-esteem of Looked After Children
- Ensure any Looked After Children are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times.
- Keep appropriate confidential records and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/student as appropriate.
- Follow advice with regard to encryption of sensitive information

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children.
- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise Looked After Children according to the DfE admissions Code of Practice.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children, previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers are met
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked After Children to act as a governor link with the Designated Teacher.
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.

- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked after Children, previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers equal access in respect of:
 1. National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational.
 2. Out of school learning and extracurricular activities.
 3. Work experience and careers guidance.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The home Local Authority social worker for the Looked After Children should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP – within 20 days of the child joining the school, or entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved.

Contributions to any review or setting up of a Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be supported by the Designated Teacher of the hospital school with the young person's views included.

The PEP is quality assured by the Virtual School. This will identify specific areas of focus and include targets and associated action to improve the student performance or educational achievement.

Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance
- Achievement and Attainment Record (academic or otherwise).
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Interests, both in and out of school
- Development needs (short and long-term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences) and support required
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).
- Extended learning opportunities.
- Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities.
- Special needs or disability (if any).
- Views of the young person, the school, the foster carer, the parent (where appropriate)

The PEP is updated and reviewed at least twice yearly or at the point of any major change and contributes to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan.

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