

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL



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## Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

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## **Introduction**

The Children's Hospital Schools at Great Ormond Street and UCH aim to promote the educational achievement and welfare of students in public care.

The Designated Teacher for looked after children is Jackie Goldsmith.

The Governors with responsibility for looked after children are Lizzie Yauner 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).

## **Aims**

The aims of The Children's Hospital schools at Great Ormond Street and UCH are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for looked after children as for all children.
- Ensure that all looked after children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that looked after children pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of looked after children pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensure that looked after children pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision and next steps in learning.
- Set high aspirations for looked after children and expect them to make exceptional progress.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.

## 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 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 will follow Camden's published admission criteria.

We seek to minimise the interruption and disruption to all children and young people's education and positively advocate for LAC.

We may offer additional support if appropriate, to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances.

## Inclusion

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our looked after children policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive.

The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all looked after children and students.

## **Allocation of resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- The school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for looked after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.
- Pupil premium plus funding is appropriately used and shows an impact on the looked after children.

## **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the looked after children 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 on the school's database so that information is readily available as required. This links with the Hospital flagging system.

## **Staff Development and Training**

The designated teacher will attend relevant training about looked after children. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with looked after children.

## **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

At The Children's Hospital Schools 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 opportunity to further this partnership working.

## **Links with external agencies/organisations**

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting looked after children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual looked after children:

- The Child's Virtual 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.
- Youth Offending Service

## **Looked After Children policy review and evaluation**

We consider the looked after children policy to be important and will 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 – 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 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.

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**

The designated teacher will:

- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to looked after children, seeking advice from the Virtual School team when appropriate.
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a looked after children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion. This includes contacting the Child's Virtual School.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil.
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to looked after children.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a looked after child transfers to another educational placement.
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- Contribute information to looked after children reviews when required.
- Report to the Governing body on looked after children in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development. (see All School Staff below)
- Ensure carers are actively involved in parents meeting and liaison with staff.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. Looked after children are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events.

## **Report to Governors**

The Report is to include:

- The number of looked after children on roll.
- The confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP including the use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus.
- Their attendance compared to other students.
- Their attainment and progress.

## **All school staff**

All school staff will:

- Follow school procedures.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a looked after children's progress and developments.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of looked after children.
- Positively promote the raising of a looked after children's self-esteem.
- 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 Teachers where a looked after children 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 records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/student as appropriate.

## **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises looked after children according to the DfE admissions Code of Practice.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for looked after children.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of looked after children are met.
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for looked after children who links with the Designated Teacher.
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.



- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of:
  1. Admission to school.
  2. National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational.
  3. Out of school learning and extracurricular activities.
  4. Work experience and careers guidance.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for looked after children.

## **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

The home social worker for the looked after children should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP – within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved.

Contributions to any review or setting up of a 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 Weakness
- 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 will be updated and reviewed at least twice yearly or at the point of any major change and contribute 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.

## Useful Links:

- Statutory Guidance (July 2014): 'Promoting the education of Looked After Children'
- Statutory Guidance on Exclusion (Jan 2015):
- 'Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England'
- Pupil Premium: Pupil Premium 2014 to 2015: conditions of grant
- Pupil Premium. Ofsted (Feb 2013): Analysis & challenge tools for schools
- Pupil Premium Spend. Sutton Trust (October 2014): Teaching and Learning Toolkit
- All-Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (September 2012):
- Education Matters in Care'
- Sutton Education Trust
- <http://www.suttontrust.com/about-us/education-endowment-foundation/>
- The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies

Name: Jackie Goldsmith

Designation: Assistant Head Teacher (Achievement for All)

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Approved by Governors: 24.6.16

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