Langley Hall Arts Academy

SSPo19

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (CLA) POLICY

PROCEDURE	REFERENCE	FORM
	Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked after children (February 2018)	
	Children Act 2004	

At Langley Hall Arts Academy, we are committed to ensuring the well-being of all members of the school community and supporting each other through times of challenge and difficulty

Introduction

Children looked after by the Local Authority (CLA) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect and are not able to be found alternative care arrangements outside of the looked after system. Children in care generally have significantly higher levels of health needs than children and young people from comparable socio-economic backgrounds who have not been looked after. Their life opportunities and long-term outcomes are also often much poorer and poor health is a factor in this. Past experiences, including a poor start in life, removal from family, placement location and transitions mean that these children are often at risk of having inequitable access to health services, both universal and specialist.

The governing body of LHAA is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked after children (February 2018)" and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 .

Children who are 'looked after' may be 'Accommodated', 'In Care' or 'remanded/ detained' as follows (however, at LHAA the first two categories in particular apply),

Accommodated (Section 20)
This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

In Care
A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order, which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

Remanded/detained
A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:

- an emergency protection order
- removed by police using their powers of protection
- remanded by a court following criminal charges

- a court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

Looked After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private.

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

The governing body of Langley Hall Primary Academy is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively.

- a Head of Children's Services For Looked After Children
- Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children.
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Children's Services should

- be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer.
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Head of Children's Services);
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive;
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded;

- ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA .

All Staff will:

- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Head of Children's Services' requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting; as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children;
- positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children.

The Governing Body of this school will:

- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names);
- ensure that there is a named Head of Children's Services for Looked After Children;
- liaise with the Principal and Head of Children's Services to ensure that the Head of Children's Services is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- support the Principal, Head of Children's Services and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;
- nominate a governor who links with the Head of Children's Services, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body. (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons)
- review the effective implementation of this policy annually

Confidentiality

Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis.

The DSL will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Training

The Principal or the Head of Children's Services will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion

1. The Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school).
2. A date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
3. A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data.
4. PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker, Head of Children's Services (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
5. A date is set for the next pep meeting Personal education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.
6. PEP sent by SW to the LAC.