



# Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent

## Looked After Children Policy October 2020

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after and previously LAC are of real concern. Students who are looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their life chances.

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention, for all our students.

With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage students to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.

- Plan support for LAC realistically and using the academy's resources efficiently in order to ensure the academy meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of academy life.
- Help students develop their cultural, moral and social understanding

### Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017 DfE (2018)
- Keeping Children safe in Education 2020'
- Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children' DfE (2017) '
- Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

### Definitions

#### LAC are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, as the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

#### Previously-LAC are defined as:

- Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society)

### Roles and responsibilities

#### The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the academy has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Reviewing the academy's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the academy.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

#### The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC children.
- Working with the academy to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-LAC as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in academy settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure social workers, academies, designated teachers, careers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's EPEP.
- Ensure that up-to-date and effective EPEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and academy attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing body annually on the following:
  - The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the academy
  - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
  - The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
  - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Promoting actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and previously-LAC at the academy.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the education department.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's personal education plan EPEP is developed and used in academy to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENDCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their EPEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing EPEP and care plans for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-LAC.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and previously-LAC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.

- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and previously-LAC.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously-LAC.

### Electronic Personal education plans (EPEPs)

\_All LAC must have a care plan;

- EPEPs are an integral part of this care plan.
- The EPEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a student to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- The EPEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- The academy will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the EPEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the EPEP process at all stages.

The EPEP will address the student's full range of education and development needs, including:

- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in academy because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new academy.
- Academy attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
- Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that has a focus on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve. Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

### Working with agencies and the VSH

The academy will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers. The academy will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review. The academy will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the academy, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

Individual plans will be written to reduce any need for restraint or reasonable force if the child is deemed vulnerable in this way. The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the EPEP. Through the designated teacher, the academy will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's EPEP are implemented without delay.

The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how pupil premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress. The academy will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or previously-LAC, and according to their needs. The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation. The academy will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and previously-LAC.

### Training

The designated teacher and other academy staff involved in the education of LAC and previously-LAC have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- Academy admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting students to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment

### Student mental health

LAC and previously-LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the academy is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously-LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary. The designated teacher will regularly measure the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by LAC and previously-LAC, a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) will be used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC's emotional wellbeing.

### Exclusions

Past experiences of LAC and and previously-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the academy's behaviour policy. The academy will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.

Where the academy has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. Exclusions will only be considered as a last resort. Where exclusion is considered, the academy will work with the VSH, and others, to consider what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements that can be made to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion. The academy will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

### Students with SEND

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the student's EPEP and care plan reviews. The SENDCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for LAC and previously-LAC.

### Information sharing

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met. The arrangements set out:

- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured.
- How students and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the academy and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual students is passed between authorities, departments and the academy when students move.

The Virtual school headteacher for Stoke on Trent LAC is Ingrid Mather  
The designated teacher for LAC and previously LAC is Mrs Diane Drew  
The SENDCO is Mrs Diane Drew.