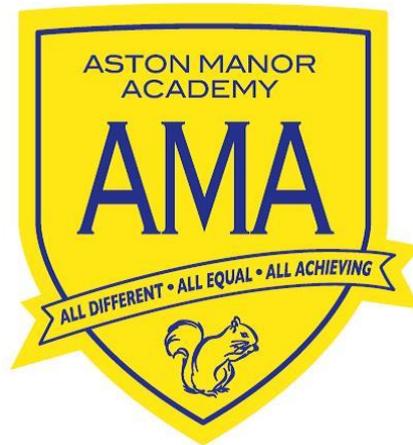


EQUITAS ACADEMIES TRUST



Chilwell Croft
Academy

CHILDREN IN CARE AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Review Date: July 2019
To be Reviewed: July 2020
Agreed: Policy Lead
Policy Lead: Sandra Coleman

CHILDREN IN CARE AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The lead Trustee for Children in Care and previously looked after children is Alex Lofthouse/Simon Spencer

The Designated person for Children in Care and previously looked after children is:

- Emma Smith – Aston Manor Academy
- Juliet Young – Chilwell Croft Academy

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are:

Aston Manor Academy	Chilwell Croft Academy
S Coleman (LEAD DSL)	S Coleman (Across Trust)
J Sweeney (DSL)	J Young (LEAD DSL)
E Smith (DSL)	G Koutsou (DSL)
S Lander (DSL)	A Murphy (DSL)
Neil Turner (DSL)	H Robbs (DSL)
Daniel Preston (DSL)	P Patel (DSL)

1. BACKGROUND

The historical underachievement of Children in Care and previously looked after children includes:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled.

All schools should have a policy for Children in Care and previously looked after children that is subject to review and approval by the Trust Board. The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of children looked after by a local authority and previously looked after children but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress.

2. THE CHILDREN ACT (1989)

Definitions of care

The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'children in care' (CIC) or 'children looked after' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also includes those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

Different living arrangements

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives
- With parents – under supervision of Children's Services.

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children's home
- In a residential school

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children in care under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Trustees (2009).

Previously Looked after children

Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 place duties on the governing body of a maintained school in England and the proprietor of an academy in England to:

- designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after pupils who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training; and
- ensure they and the designated teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has the power to make regulations to prescribe the necessary qualifications or experience of the designated member of staff for previously looked-after children. Designated teachers will want to satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support by asking the child's parents for evidence of their previously looked-after status. For children adopted outside England and Wales, the child must have been looked after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, designated teachers will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, designated teachers could discuss eligibility with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to agree a consistent approach.

3. THE POLICY

The Objective

The objective of this policy is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of children in care on the roll of the Academies within the Trust.

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care and previously looked after children
Within school systems:

- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child in care and previously looked after children on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated.
- To advise on the most effective use of the Pupil Premium funding during the Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting.
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding, where relevant, is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced.
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'in care' and previously looked after children and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care and previously looked after children, and to promote the involvement of these children in extra-curricular activities such as homework clubs, school productions, school councils and leadership etc.
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in care.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services and birth parents where appropriate.
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care and previously looked after children to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date and used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and progress.
- To track and support the educational progress of all Children in Care and previously looked after children in order to inform the schools' development plans.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding provide measures to accelerate progress.
- To intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy.
- To inform the planning and, where relevant, transition for children in Care post 16.
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them.
- To report to the Trust Board on an annual basis on the outcomes for Children in Care and previously looked after children.
- To participate in training organised by the Virtual School.
- To support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher(s) working with Children in Care and previously looked after children.

Work with Individual Children in Care and previously looked after children

- To meet with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or students.
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan.

- To ensure that the student voice section of the Personal Education Plan is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the student are faithfully represented in the PEP.
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new child in Care into the school or a previously looked after child.
- To develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of Children in Care or previously looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

Liaison:

- To liaise with the member of school staff responsible for monitoring children on a Child Protection Plan.
- To develop good communication with Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan is supported by the child's care plan.
- To be the named contact for colleagues in Children's Services (CS)
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school role to the Virtual School as requested – attainment termly, and attendance each month.

Training:

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate
- To develop knowledge of procedures by attending training events organised by the Children's Services, the Virtual School or local Designated Teachers.
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from the DfE or other research or policy.

4. TRUSTEE

The named Trustee will report to the Trust Board on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked after and previously looked after students in the school
- A comparison of progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other students
- The attendance of students as a discrete group, compared to other students
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Student destinations after leaving the school.

The named Trustee should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Children in Care and previously looked after children have equal access to:

- The Curriculum
- Public examinations
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. One to One tuition
- Careers guidance
- Extra- curricular activities
- Work experience
- The most effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding to help raise attainment.

The named Trustee is encouraged to support the school on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Pupil and Family Support Worker working with children in Care and previously looked after children if offered to ensure and confirm the school's best practice

The named Trustee will be expected to have attended Trustee training on Children in Care and previously looked after children.

5. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority or previously looked after child. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Headteacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Children in care and previously looked after children/Family Support Worker.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is in care only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Headteacher or the Designated Teacher for Children in Care and previously looked after children /Family Support Worker.

6. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

On admission, records will be requested from the student or pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan. An appropriate school induction should take place.

7. INVOLVE THE YOUNG PERSON

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the student voice section of the Personal Education Plan by the Designated Teacher/Family Support Worker to inform the PEP and care plan review meetings.

It is important to establish the young person's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a social worker/teacher/carer prepares the young person for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other students in the playground.

8. COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. end of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's social worker in addition to the foster carer or residential social worker and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School.

The school's and education and social work colleagues within Children's Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual or a Statement Review and a Personal Education Plan meeting or review.

It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if school is considering a change of course, there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision such as behaviour or attendance.

9. ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Each student in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is developed jointly by the social worker and Designated Teacher. 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:

- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)
- Development needs (short- and long-term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations)
- Educational data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages
- Extended learning opportunities
- Involvement in out of school hours activities
- Special needs (if any)
- Attendance
- Behaviour

The PEP will be updated and reviewed at least termly 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.

10. REVIEW AND AMMENDMENT

This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust Board. The application and outcomes of this policy will be monitored to ensure it is working effectively.

Date of next review: July 2020