



Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Looked After Children Policy

Key staff:	J Leech
Key governor:	
Last reviewed:	April 2015 October 2017
Approved by Governing Body:	<i>A Tremarco</i>
Date:	October 2017
Due for renewal:	July 2019 (or if there are any legislative changes before then)

Aims of this policy

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children.
- Ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. This should be a differentiated curriculum reflecting the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment with regular home-school contact.
- Ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practical, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Designated teacher for LAC

The designated teacher for LAC is Mrs S Strawson with support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ms Leech (Deputy Head) and other members of the Safeguarding Team.

Each child will be allocated a designated key worker (member of Safeguarding Team) and a key adult who will work with them during their time in school.

The Governing Body

The governor with responsibility for looked after children is Mrs .

An annual report will be presented to the Governing Body to review the policy, procedures and practice relating to our looked after children. **(See Appendix 1 - Roles and Responsibilities).**

Who are Children Looked After?

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 into 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 'Children Looked After' (LAC). They may be looked after by our school's local authority or may be in the care of another authority.

Admissions policy

The Governing Body believes that the admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. Due to care placement changes, children may enter school part way through the school year. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad based curriculum.

Our policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC pupils.

Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Monitoring the progress of LAC

The designated teacher will complete the PEP in conjunction with the child and social worker. This should include information about:

- the child's details that the school needs to know – such as age; care status; where the child lives; school history and whether the child has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or are having their SEN met through School Action or School Action Plus;
- the child's carers;
- the child's parents and what restrictions might apply in relation to their contact with the child;
- who to contact within the local authority that looks after the child (social worker and looked after children education team contact).

If a child has been looked after for some time, the PEP should include information about educational progress and how s/he learns best.

Children who are already looked after when they join the school should have an existing PEP. This should be transferred to the child's new school. If the local authority has not provided the most recent PEP, the designated teacher should make sure that this is followed up with the authority which looks after the child.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

See Appendix 2 – the PEP

Record Keeping

The designated teacher will know who are all the LAC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. It is important that the school flags a child's looked after status appropriately in SIMs so that information is readily available as required.

Careful tracking will take place of Pupil Premium Plus funding.

School will attend all LAC Reviews and planning meetings in relation to Pupil Premium/PEP.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. 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 children:

- LACES
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service
- School age parents' officer

LAC policy review and evaluation

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of our practice each year. The policy will be reviewed in line with any procedural changes.

APPENDIX 1

Roles and responsibilities

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children – LAC - 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

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.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by LAC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for LAC within school
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the school community
- know who are all the LAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- attend relevant training about LAC
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the social worker/LACES when appropriate.
- ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- discuss the use of pupil premium with the social worker, carer and young person
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- 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 LAC
- ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extracurricular activities for a LAC

- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement
- contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- report to the Governing body on LAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
 - the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a PEP
 - their attendance compared to other pupils
 - their attainment compared to other pupils
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC
- arrange a key person to whom the young person can talk to
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- follow school procedures
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC
- work to raise the self-esteem of a looked after child
- ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC is experiencing difficulties
- give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- 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/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria makes appropriate provision for looked after children
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC who liaises with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - the curriculum, examinations, extra-curricular activities, work experience and careers guidance.
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of any children who are excluded

The Local Authority will:

- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC
- ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- ensure that LAC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible

- ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Liverpool from another authority
- make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of Key Stage 2, 3, 4 and 5 and at any mid-phase transfer
- support LAC through utilising external agencies such as LACES
- be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs.

Local Authority contact for LACES:

LACES
Children's Services
Toxteth Annexe
Aigburth Road
Liverpool
L17 7BN

Tel - 233 3921

APPENDIX 2

PEP Guidance (Liverpool)

- The attendance of the Social Worker at all PEP meetings is compulsory.
- The attendance of the carer should be encouraged. A report will be generated three monthly and any carer that does not attend on two consecutive occasions is to be contacted by the Fostering Service.
- An invitation to the parents, if they are not the main carer, is at the discretion of the Social Worker.
- Although the targets on the pupil views form should inform the meeting they are not necessarily the targets that are eventually set.
- Academic levels need to be included as a copy of the school's academic tracking.
- The social worker represents the Local Authority in their duty to pass on the PEP when there is a change of academic placement.
- The PEP will automatically go to the LAC Review Unit so will be available for all LAC reviews.
- If a young person is on the role of the school, even if attending an alternative provision, the PEP is still the responsibility of the school.
- If a young person attends a school that is out of borough it is the social worker that completes the on line PEP.
- The PEP of any young person not on role will be completed by the LACES team.
- Please make sure that the e mail address that is given for the return of the PEP is a work address due to confidentiality issues.

PEP Flow Chart

