



**The EDGE ACADEMY
AP FREE SCHOOL**

**LOOKED AFTER
CHILDREN
POLICY**

April 2015

Looked After Children Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 stated that from September 2009 governing bodies are required to appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of 'Looked after children' and ensure that this person receives appropriate training.
- In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care and drew attention to;
 - Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
 - A high level of disruption and change in school placements
 - Lack of involvement in extracurricular 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.
- **The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. 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 'looked after children' (LAC). Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.**
- **The DFE has published Statutory Guidance regarding the Education of LAC pupils in July 2014.**
- 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, or
 - Even with parents under supervision
- Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living;
 - In foster care
 - In a children's home, or

- In a residential school
- This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

2. THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- Has the duty 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 understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- Will inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extracurricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;
- Will also act as an advocate for children and young people in care and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services.
- The Designated Teacher holds a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date.
- will monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked-after in order to inform the academy's development plan and intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy.
- will ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan are implemented fully and that all relevant staff are aware of them and ensure best value when spending the additional budget share made available specifically for children looked after to support achievement.
- Will be responsible for the appropriate allocation of the Pupil Premium for children looked after and to be accountable for how it is spent
- They will advise on and ensure that an EHC plan is coordinated if necessary.
- The Designated Teacher will also report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis (and preferably each term) on the outcomes for children looked after.

3. WORKING WITH INDIVIDUAL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- The Designated Teacher will work with individual children and young people, 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 pupils.
- They will enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan and implement a Personal Education Plan for each child and review it as required in the notes of guidance as this will contribute to the educational component of their care plan.
- They will ensure that a Home-Academy Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker and supervise the smooth induction of a new looked after child into the academy.
- The Designated Teacher will develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of children in care and close the gap between them and their peers and fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available

4. THE DESIGNATED TEACHER AND LIAISON

- It is the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register.
- They will help communication with the care setting staff so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the child's Care Plan and attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews.
- They will also ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies and individuals, and report on the progress of all children in care on the academy role to the Local Authority Parenting Officer as requested.

5. THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR

- The named Governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information;
- The number of looked-after pupils in the academy.
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils

- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
 - Pupil destinations
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- The named Governor will be satisfied that the academy's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to;
- The National Curriculum
 - Public examinations
 - Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. as outlined in the DfE publication Making Good Progress
 - Careers information, advice and guidance
 - Additional education support
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Work experience

6. THE ACADEMY'S 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. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Principal and/or the Designated Teacher for Children in Care.

7. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

- On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's current/previous school. This will be part of information sharing during the commissioning process, between Edge Academy and the commissioning school. 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 will take place.
- Education Law defines who is a parent very widely. It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. This means it is possible for someone who does not have parental responsibility to be a 'parent' because they have care of the child in question for example the foster carer.

8. INVOLVING THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

- It is important that a child or 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 academy, 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 Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan by the Designated Teacher to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings
- It is important to establish the child'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 child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils during unstructured time

9. COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- A copy of all reports (e.g. End of year reports) will be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and if appropriate to the parent/s.
- Schools 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 the academy is considering an exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

10. ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

- Each pupil 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 concern and include achievable targets. Areas for consideration will include;
 - Attendance
 - Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)
 - Behaviour
 - Extended learning opportunities
 - Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities
 - Special needs (if any)
 - 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)
- The PEP will be updated and reviewed at least annually or at the point of any major change. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation of the educational targets within the Plan.

- The named Governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all looked-after children against the key indicators outlined above.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

- The Designated Teacher will review this policy as determined by the Governing Body and/or when legislation and guidance changes.
- Its implementation and effectiveness will be monitored by the Designated Teacher and the Governing Body.
- This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy.
- The policy will be regularly updated but also formally reviewed every year. The review will involve consultation with stakeholders.

This Policy was reviewed on:

Ratified by Governors on:

Renewal Date: