

Woolwich Polytechnic School Looked After Child Policy

Rationale:

Woolwich Polytechnic School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

Designated Teacher for LAC – Gwen Ward

Governor with responsibility for LAC – Bob Janes

The Governing Body of Woolwich Polytechnic School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC.

We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government’s aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

Policy in Practice:

This policy statement outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors of Woolwich Polytechnic School 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
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to 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
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Who are Looked After Children?

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 ‘**Looked After Children**’ -LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Admissions

The Governing Body will ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE’s Admissions Code of Practice.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC 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 social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. The school will play an active part in supporting the process and it is vital that it assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at termly 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.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the LAC in the school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker.

The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other authorities. It is important that the school "flags" LAC status appropriately in its information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development

The Designated Teacher will be provided with appropriate training to carry out his/her role.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At Woolwich Polytechnic 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 LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- LAC teams
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- medical officers
- school nurses
- CAMHS
- Attendance Advisory Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service
- Team Around The School/Child

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children 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 extra-curricular 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 the 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 LAC team when appropriate.
- ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering the 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 that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care 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
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC 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 extra-curricular activities for 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:
 1. the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
 2. their attendance compared to other pupils.
 3. their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils.
 4. the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 5. the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC.
- arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk,
- 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.

All school staff will:

- follow school procedures.
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress.
- have as high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LACs as for other pupils
- positively promote the raising of a LAC's self-esteem.
- 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 Teacher 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.

The Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE's Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
 1. admission to the school
 2. National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 3. out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
 4. Counselling and mentoring services
 5. work experience and careers guidance.

Woolwich Polytechnic School

Will:

- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC.
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to any exclusion meetings of LAC.

Policy date : November 2012

Review Date : November 2015

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