RICARDS LODGE HIGH SCHOOL

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy

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Ricards Lodge High School Policy on the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Mission Statement

The Governors and Staff at Ricards Lodge High School recognise their responsibilities as corporate parents and therefore are committed to improving educational attainment and achievement for children in public care and previously looked after children to achieve government targets and to bring attainment closer in line with their peers.

Context

Education matters and it is a child's entitlement. School is an important part of everyday life. It is somewhere to

- Develop self-confidence and skills.
- Receive praise and encouragement.
- Learn about and build relationships.
- Achieve.

At Ricards Lodge We Aim

- To improve and promote life chances of children in public care and previously looked after children.
- To track and raise the educational achievement and attainment of looked after (LAC) and previously looked after children. (PLAC)[1]
- To foster multi-agency working.
- Ensure LAC and PLAC students receive equal educational opportunities despite any disadvantage they have encountered or continue to encounter in life.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of our Governors is to:

- Ensure the needs of each looked after child and previously looked after child are met, so that each child receives equal opportunities in education.
- Ensure that a policy for children in/ previously in public care is in place.
- Ensure school has a designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children.

- Ensure the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- Appoint a Governor with special responsibilities to oversee the education of LAC and PLAC in Ricards Lodge High School
- Receive and discuss termly reports on children in public care and previously looked after children.
- Assist the school in looking at whether its policies adequately meet the needs of looked after and previously looked after children.
- The ensure that designated teacher role contribute to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve

The role of the Head Teacher is to:

- Nominate an appropriate person to fill the role of designated teacher. It would be desirable for it to be someone with sufficient authority to influence school policy and practice.
- Liaise on a regular basis with the designated teacher on issues relating to children in public care.
- for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.
- Monitor the statutory requirement that every child in public care has a Personal Education Plan.
- Keep Governors informed about the achievement of children in public care and previously looked after children
- Monitor:
    - whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met;
    - whether any looked-after or previously looked-after children face additional safeguarding challenges of which the school's designated safeguarding lead should be aware;
    - whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level;
    - whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children have mental health needs and whether those needs are being identified and met;
    - whether the school's behaviour management policy is sufficiently flexible to respond to

looked-after and previously looked-after children's challenging behaviour in the most effective way for those children;

- how the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked after children are reflected in school policies, in particular in relation to interventions and resources;
- what the impact is of any of the school's policies, e.g. on charging for educational visits and extended school activities, on looked-after children; and
- what impact Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) has in supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The role of the Designated Teacher is to:

- Oversee the progress of all children in public care and children previously looked after.
- Liaise with foster carers and inform them of school issues.
- Keep an up to date register of looked after children on roll from any local authority.
- Keep a record of social worker and social services contact numbers.
- Keep the Virtual School informed of amendments to the list of children in public care.
- Liaise with other agencies on issues relating to children in public care.
- Be an advocate for looked after children
- Inform staff of a child's care status and determine the extent to which information is shared with other members of staff.
- Ensure that all teachers:
  - high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
  - are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
  - understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
  - appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;

- Participate in Virtual School and multi-agency training on the education of looked after children
- Ensure that staff have relevant information/skills to enable them to positively promote the educational achievement of looked after and post looked after children
- Ensure that children in public care have a person in school that they can trust and to talk to, and this may not necessarily be the designated teacher.
- Check that all children in public care have a Personal Education Plan and that this is reviewed concurrently with the care plan (i.e. within 28 days, 3 months, 6 months etc).
- Ensure that when children in public care are new to the school, they have a welcoming induction, as for all new entrants to the school.
- Ensure that particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
- thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
- Ensure speedy transfer of educational information between the agencies, new schools and relevant parties.
- Attend statutory reviews as requested or ensure that a written report is presented.
- Work closely with the social worker and carers to ensure relevant information is shared regarding changes in the child/young person's life.
- Develop knowledge of Care and Education procedures by attending training events organised by the Virtual School and disseminate to staff.
- Act as a curriculum advisor for other staff and governors on developments relevant to children in public care.
- Monitor the attendance of children in public care and previously looked after children.
- To ensure that LAC and PLAC children are prioritised for one to one tuition and other initiatives.

The role of the Head of Year/Form Tutor is to

- Liaise with the designated teacher on issues relating to children in public care and previously looked after children in their class.

- Liaise with carers and inform them of school issues, and provide opportunities for them to discuss educational progress.

The role of the SENCO is to

- Liaise with the designated teacher and class teacher relating to issues of children in public care or PLAC who are on the SEND register
- Liaise with SENDIS regarding looked after children or previously looked after children who have EHC Plans.
- Liaise with carers and advise them of strategies that can support educational needs of the children in their care who are on the SEND register

The role of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- The PEP forms part of the care plan and should be completed within 20 days when a new LAC joins the school.
- The second PEP should be done after three months, subsequent PEPs are completed six monthly.
- The outcomes of the PEP should be used to enhance and promote the education of the LAC student.
- The PEP and other information should be speedily transferred to a new school.

Confidentiality

The Head and/or the designated teacher have responsibility for informing all staff who are in contact with the student of their care status.

As the initial contact of carers and other agencies with the school, the school office will have knowledge of the student.

It is appropriate for a Teaching Assistant (TA), to know that the child or young person is in public care when directly involved in the teaching of the child or young person.

Other staff may need to know if there are particular concerns that require a whole-school approach.

In each case, the extent of the information shared will be determined by the Head teacher and the designated teacher. In every case, only information that is critical to the effective working relationship will be passed on.

Admissions

On admission to the school, records will be requested from the previous school, where appropriate and a PEP meeting held usually triggered by Social Services.

An appropriate school induction will take place.

Involving the child or young person

The child/young person will be consulted and involved in decisions about themselves according to their age and understanding.

A child or young person will be made aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them depends on their age and understanding. The explanation will emphasise that the school, social worker and the carers are working together to support their education.

Staff may discuss, or ask an appropriate person to discuss, how the child or young person will tackle questions about their home, by peers in the playground for example.

Involving the parent/carers

The school recognises that support from home greatly assists a child's educational progress and aims to involve parents and carers.

The school will maintain regular communication with the foster carer and will ensure copies of reports are forwarded to the social worker and Virtual School in addition to the foster carer and parent (where appropriate).

Involving other agencies

The school recognises that multi-agency working is critical to the support and progress of children in public care, which may include Social Services, Virtual School, Education Welfare Officer, School Nurse etc.

The school will work closely with other agencies involved in supporting the achievements and welfare of the child, particularly the social worker.

The school will exchange significant information to appropriate personnel between reviews when necessary.

Assessment, planning, monitoring and review procedures

Assessment, planning and monitoring will be carried out by class and subject teachers as with all pupils, in accordance with general school practice.

Each student in public care will have PEP as part of their Care Plan. This will identify basic information,

act as a record of progress, identify specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. The PEP will be reviewed and will feed into the Care Plan.

When a LAC has SEND the additional support will be put in place as described in the school's SEND and Inclusion Policy.

The designated teacher will maintain an overview of the progress and needs of each child in public care and previously looked after child.

The Head teacher and designated governor will report termly to the Governing body. This policy will be reviewed regularly.

This policy links to a number of other school policies including-:

- Admissions
- SEND Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour for learning policy

[1] a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;

a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person3, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and

a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.