

# **HAZELEY ACADEMY**



## **Looked After Children Policy**

Last reviewed: October 2019

# **Looked After Children Policy**

## **Rationale**

The Hazeley Academy aims to provide a caring and secure environment in which tolerance, understanding and respect for others are fostered. This is achieved through staff, students, Board of Directors and parents working in partnership to promote a positive culture and to encourage in all students a sense of responsibility to themselves, to the Academy community and to the outside world. It is particularly important that we address the needs of our Looked After Children and previously looked after children as they can be a vulnerable group of students.

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, LAC are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 75% of LAC leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

## **Definition of a Looked After Child**

A Looked After Child is a child that is in care:

Children that were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or a special guardianship order.

## **Policy objective**

The objective of this policy is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After students as defined under section 52 of the Children's Act 2004. This policy is based on the advice given in "supporting Looked after Learners" (DfES 2006) and endorses the Every Child Matters agenda.

Special guardianship was introduced as an amendment to the Children's Act 1989 by the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 and became law on 30 December 2005.

## **Admissions**

- The Hazeley Academy prioritises Looked After Children in our admission policy in line within Milton Keynes Council guidance.
- On admission, records will be requested from the student's previous school and a meeting will be arranged with the carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the Personal Educational Plan.

## **Personal Educational Plan (PEP)**

- All looked after children will have a current PEP
- If a Looked After Child joins the Academy without a PEP, the designated teacher will pursue the matter with the child's Social Worker who has a statutory duty to initiate the PEP.

- The Hazeley Academy will work alongside the assigned Social Worker to contribute to the educational content of the PEP.
- When a child leaves the Academy, it is the duty of the designated teacher to ensure the PEP is passed on to the next designated teacher.

## **The role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children**

The Designated Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that there is appropriate provision and support within the Academy for Looked After Children.
- Receiving PEPs from Social Workers and supporting the development of the plan.
- Providing a central point of contact for all the professionals working with each Looked After Child.
- Monitoring the educational progress of all Looked After Children, any individual under achievement and absence from the Academy.
- Ensuring the professional development in this area is shared with all staff.

## **The Role of Board of Directors**

- There will be a named Director responsible for Looked After Children.
- When the school admits a Looked After Child, the named Director will liaise with the Designated Teacher to monitor progress and identify any barriers to learning.
- The Board of Directors will ensure that the school policies are reviewed from the point of view of Looked After Children.

## **Special Educational Needs**

The Hazeley Academy will ensure that any special educational needs are promptly identified; bearing in mind that Looked After Children may have missed schooling. Suitable learning support will be provided by the SENCO and Designated Teachers will be responsible for liaising with carers and other professionals.

## **Exclusions**

The 2004 Statutory Guidance states:

“It is important to be especially sensitive in relation to exclusions where looked after children are concerned. Every practicable means should be tried to maintain the child in school.”

Hazeley Academy recognises that LAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person’s PEP will reflect strategies to support the child. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Please refer to the school’s Behaviour Policy for more information.

## **Home-school liaison**

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

**Links with other agencies**

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

**Confidentiality** Information on LAC will be shared with school staff on a “need to know” basis . The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.