



TIMU ACADEMY TRUST

Policy Document for: Looked After Children (LAC)

Approved: May 2020

Due for Review: May 2021

Timu Trust recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorses the Kent County Council policy and welcomes LAC who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Kent.

Our approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC) is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.
- All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker (through the Virtual School – known as VS), which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
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- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.

Rationale

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, Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, Looked After Children (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 Looked After children 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.

Timu Trust recognises that Looked After Children can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that some Looked After Children may have specific difficulties in obtaining transport and attendance, completing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as possible stigma about their circumstances.

We recognise that Looked After Children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty

Looked After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others.
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few
- have behaviour issues.
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life chances. Timu believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Looked After Child can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that LAC are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

The aims of the school with relation to LAC

- To work closely with the VS to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for LAC.
- To ensure that all policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children and young people.
- To ensure that LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Within the Personal Education Plan (PEP), to provide a differentiated curriculum and additional interventions as required appropriate to the individual's needs.
- To ensure that LAC take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- To ensure that parents, carers and social workers of LAC are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- To ensure that LAC are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Legislation

- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act").
- Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act").
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act.
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.

This policy is informed with the guidance of 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children' DfE 2018

Roles and responsibilities

Head of school

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below.
- It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Governing Body

- The Clerk will ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.

Receive a report 3 times a year setting out:

1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
3. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
4. The destinations of pupils who leave the school (in the end of year report)
5. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

Designated Teacher

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least a week before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately

- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage Looked After Children to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Looked After Children.

Designated teacher for LAC – Tim Harwood, Iwade; Katrine Stewart, Bobbing

All staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children’s confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher’s requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School’s policy.

Confidentiality

Information on looked after children 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.

Induction

Where appropriate a LAC should receive a planned induction process which would involve time spent in school, meeting the teachers, orientating themselves. This will ideally take place as multiple sessions over the course of the week.

Personal Education Plan (PEP) Completion

- School is asked to take a LAC and is in discussion with the school as to how they can meet their needs
- Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school)
- Date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data PEP meeting takes place within 6 weeks or sooner, involving the social worker, Virtual School representative, designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.

- A date is set for the next pep meeting Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.
- PEP sent by SW to the LAC team

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC/YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Exclusions

Timu 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 Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. 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 Positive Behaviour Handbook (including behaviour and exclusions policy) for more information.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked After Children. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Looked After Children, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, the most able or those having learning or physical needs. The SENCo will be informed of any child who has additional needs so that these can be effectively supported to allow the child to make the best possible progress in their learning.

Admissions

Timu recognises that due to care arrangements, LAC may enter the school at any time and it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and transition visits to help them settle. The oversubscription criteria rank LAC and post-LAC as the highest admission criteria. See the Trust **admissions policy** for more information.

Links with 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 including Social Care teams, Educational Psychologist, Health Services and CAMHS.

Post-LAC

We continue to closely track and support children who have been adopted from care or placed in special guardianship. These children have an EPLAC (Education Plan for Previously Looked After children) which involves the class teacher, Designated Teacher, SENCo, parents and the child. This may also involve the Local Authority as part of their duty under section 23ZZA of the Children Act.

This will be reviewed 3 times a year, through additional consultations at parent evenings. This draft EPLAC is then shared with the class teacher for their input before being finalised.