

LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document outlines LEAP Multi-Academy Trust's policy in relation to Locked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Looked After Children

1.2 A child who is looked after by a Local Authority as defined in Section 22 Children Act 1989, means a child who is:-

- subject to a care order (interim or full care order)
- or voluntarily accommodated by the Local Authority.

1.3 They may:-

- Live with foster parents
- Live in a residential children's home
- Live with extended family

1.4 The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect.

Previously Looked After Children

1.5 Is a child who has been subject to one of the above orders but is now:-

- the subject of an adoption order
- special guardianship order
- returned to parental home

1.6 Previously looked after children potentially remain vulnerable owing to their life experiences. These children may require additional support to safeguard them and much of this policy refers to them also.

1.7 Upon entry into any Academy which is part of LEAP Multi-Academy Trust, families are asked to declare whether their child has been previously looked after, so that Academy staff can monitor them closely, intervene and support quickly. Further documentation should be seen by the Academy but a copy should not be kept; sight of the document should be logged on the Academy's safeguarding system and the status recorded on SIMS.

2. Aims of the Policy

2.1 The policy aims to ensure that:-

- Each Academy is a place where looked after children and previously looked after children feel safe, valued and welcome
- Looked after children and previously looked after children are encouraged to and are able to reach their full potential
- Educational attainment of these children is brought nearer to that of their peers
- Issues relating to these children are recognised and addressed to best support their needs and progress

3. Leadership and Management

3.1 LEAP's Board of Trustees and all Governors will maintain an overview of the implementation of the policy on looked after children and previously looked after children

3.2 Trustees, Governors and Academy leaders will encourage, support and enable Looked after children to reach their full potential

- 3.3 In each school, the SEND Co-ordinator is the designated teacher for looked after children. The SENDCo is a member of the Designated Safeguarding Lead team and co-ordinates support for looked after children, previously looked after children and ensures that Academy/School staff attend relevant meetings as well as liaising with the Virtual School(s).
- 3.4 The designated teacher will ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- 3.5 The designated teacher will have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the Authority looking after him/her as well as details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.
- 3.6 Care leavers: Local Authorities have on-going responsibilities to the young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers; they will appoint a personal adviser who develops a pathway plan with the young person. This plan describes how the Local Authority will support the care leaver to participate in education or training. Academy staff will work with this Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver, and liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

4. Review and Evaluation

- 4.1 This policy and its strategies will be reviewed in line with all Trust/Academy policies, particularly the Safeguarding Policy.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 The following strategies are principal amongst those designed to pursue the aims of this policy:-
 - Looked after children will be included in all additional activities for vulnerable children at Y6 to Y7 transition
 - Each looked after child will be allocated support from the relevant Achievement Support(BA) / Engage(DHS) / SEND(ECK) Practitioner. The extent of this support will depend on the needs of the individual
 - For each looked after child, a named lead worker in Academy will be responsible for links with Social Services, Local Authority Looked After Children's Support Services (usually via the Virtual School) and any other agencies involved with the young person
 - Concerns about the attendance or progress of looked after children will be made known at an early stage to agencies which may be in a position to provide additional support
 - Academy staff, wherever possible, will attend all meetings held to discuss the needs and progress of looked after children
 - Academy staff will contribute actively to the production and review of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for looked after children and will complement these, where necessary, with Pastoral Support Plans and SEN support plans
 - The social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of looked after children will be treated as priority by the relevant Academy Support Department. This work will form part of looked after child (LAC) review and PEP reviews.
 - The learning needs of looked after children will be treated as priority by the relevant Achievement Support(BA) / Engage(DHS) / SEND(ECK) Department, particularly in cases where looked after children have experienced interruptions in their learning
 - The use of pupil premium plus funding will be closely linked to agreed actions within the PEP and LAC reviews

- The Academy will take proactive steps to prevent the permanent exclusion of looked after children
- The Academy will agree to put on roll looked after children, who live within catchment, even if the standard admission number for the relevant year group has been reached
- The Academy will admit at the earliest possible opportunity looked after children transferring to the Academy other than at the start of the educational year (see LEAP Admissions Policy).