



Looked after Children Policy

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TOVE LEARNING TRUST

Policy for the education and care of looked-after and previously looked-after children

Policy Objective

The objective of the policy is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked-after pupils and previously looked-after children. This policy is based on the advice given in "Promoting the Education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children 2018"; "The designated teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children 2018"; and "Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of looked after children March 2015".

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children

Designated Lead: Mrs Paula Smith Assistant Principal/SENCo

Governor Responsible: Reverend Chris Youngman

Definition - A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked-after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989. - A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked-after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person or has been adopted from state care outside England and Wales; and - A child is in state care outside 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

Responsibility of the Governing body -

- The role of the governing body must designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils, including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered at the school.
- The governing body must ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training (section 20(2) of the 2008 Act) and ensure that they have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- The Governing Body will ensure there is a named Governor responsible for looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- The designated teacher will report to the governing body and school leadership team and act on any issues raised as targets for improvement.
- When the school admits a looked-after child or previously looked-after child, the named governor will liaise with the designated teacher to monitor progress and identify any barriers to learning.
- This process should help identify issues for school improvement and feed into the SIP.
- The Governing Body will ensure that the school policies are reviewed from the point of view of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.

The role of the designated teacher for looked-after children - The designated teacher should:

- Be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the fullest in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
- Have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's role. This involves working with the Virtual Schools to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the learning is personalised and emotional, academic and personal needs are prioritised.
- Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning.
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians and social workers to: promote good home school links; support progress; ensure that they understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home; help to understand how the school teaches literacy and numeracy; and encourage high aspirations, working with the child to plan for the future.
- Should discuss with the social worker how the school should engage with birth parents and ensure that school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's personal education plan (PEP) within the school and liaise with outside agencies.
- Work with the designated safeguarding leads to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Have ultimate responsibility for leading the process of target setting for individual looked-after children in school and rigorously tracking their attainment progress. Provide an annual report on looked-after children to the LGB. This will be sensitively written so as not to identify a looked-after child and must include information on attainment, progress, attendance, exclusions, impact of pupil premium plus and admissions.
- The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. **This means making sure that all staff:**
 - Have strong awareness, training and skills around the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and how to support them
 - Have high expectations and set targets to accelerate educational progress
 - Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children might find it difficult to build relationships of trust because of their experience and how this might affect a child's behaviour.
 - Understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogenous group, not publically 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 that they are being supported
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of the social workers, Virtual School and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and 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 and guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

In addition to this, the designated teacher should contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:

- They do not unintentionally put looked-after or previously looked-after children at a disadvantage.
- Transitions to the next phase of education are supported, with thought given to the future, careers advice and guidance about further education, training and employment (where appropriate)
- There are no barriers to looked-after children and previously looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers its pupils.
- There is a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- The young person is able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets.
- They are also able to talk about any difficult issues with a sympathetic and empathetic adult, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Looked-after and previously looked-after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that they have access to academic focused study support.
- They are encouraging carers to understand the importance of supporting learning at home.

Statutory guidance contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

Admissions

- Rushden Academy prioritise looked-after children and previously looked-after children in our Admissions Policies.
- We will work to ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children are admitted promptly after a request for a place has been made, to avoid unnecessary disruption to the child's schooling.
- On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be arranged with carer/parent/guardian Social Worker as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the timetable, and any arrangements that need to be put in place.

- We will provide an effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to school and new to care and will remind parents and guardians that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- All looked-after children (LAC) will have a current PEP.
- If a LAC joins the school 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 school will work alongside the assigned Social Worker to contribute to the education content of the PEP.
- The Designated Teacher will lead on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored.
- They will have overall responsibility for monitoring and tracking attainment, and ensuring that identified actions are put into place.
- They should work closely with other staff in school to judge whether teaching and learning and intervention strategies are being used to support achievement and wellbeing.
- When a child leaves the school, the designated teacher will ensure that the PEP is passed on to the next designated teacher.

Pupil Premium Funding

- Pupil Premium funding will be used appropriately to provide additional identified support and intervention, taking into account the specific needs of pupils.
- The designated teacher will work with the social worker, carer and young person to identify support which will help the young person to achieve their potential.
- All funding for looked-after children will be monitored and agreed by the virtual school and will be discussed, reviewed and agreed at the young person's PEP meeting.

Additional Educational Needs (e.g. SEN, G&T, Attendance & Behaviour)

Rushden Academy will ensure that any special educational needs are promptly identified, bearing in mind that looked-after and previously looked-after children are significantly more likely to have SEND than their peers. Suitable learning support will be provided and the SENCo and designated teacher will be responsible for liaising with carers and other professionals.

Any special educational support provided by schools for looked-after children with SEND but who do not need an EHC plan, will be looked at as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews, involving Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) where necessary.

For previously looked-after children, the SENCo, class teacher/s, designated teacher and the specialists should involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. They should agree the outcomes to be achieved through SEND support, including a date by which progress will be reviewed. Virtual Schools may be invited to comment on the proposed SEND provision.

Where there is a need for an Educational Care Plan (EHCP) Rushden Academy will ensure that:

- The special educational needs and disability code of practice 0 to 25 years, as it relates to looked after children, is followed.
- The child's PEP works in harmony with his or her EHC plan to tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the child's needs are being met.
- We will consider how the statement/EHC plan adds to information about how education, health and care needs will be met without the need to duplicate unnecessarily the information that is already part of the child's care plan or PEP.
- With the help of the Virtual School, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEND issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and LA support team where applicable.

Mental Health

- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. This can impact on their education and behaviour.
- Rushden Academy will ensure that staff are able to: identify signs of potential mental health issues and understand how to access assessment and support where necessary; understand the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Exclusions

It is important to be especially sensitive in relation to exclusions where looked-after and previously looked after children are concerned.

Where a school has concerns about a looked-after child's behaviour, the Virtual Schools should be informed and, where necessary, involved at the earliest opportunity. This is to enable the Virtual School, working with others, to:

- Consider what additional assessment and support (such as additional help for the classroom teacher, one-to-one therapeutic work or a suitable alternative placement) needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for exclusion.
- Make any additional arrangements to support the child's on-going education in the event of an exclusion.

Where a school has concerns about the behaviour of a previously looked-after child which could result in the child being excluded from school, the child's parents or the designated teacher, following discussions with the child's parents may seek the advice of the Virtual School on strategies to support the child to avoid exclusion.

Every practicable means should be tried to maintain the child in school. In school we will find viable alternatives to fixed term / permanent exclusions in conjunction with the Local Authority. Exclusion should be an absolute last resort. Promoting the Education of looked-after children (DFE February 2018)

Further guidance on Virtual Schools Northamptonshire can be found at the following link:

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/virtual-school/Pages/default.aspx>

This policy was been approved by the board on: **13.01.20**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T Foster', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Signature of AIB chair:

Name of chair of the Board: **Tim Foster**

Date for renewal: **12.01.21**