



THE BRUNTS ACADEMY

Child Looked After Policy

Date of approval: July 2022



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General Data Protection Regulations

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which replaced the Data Protection Act 1998 from 25th May 2018. The introduction of GDPR has resulted in changes to many existing data protection rules and regulations that educational establishments adhere to. The Evolve Trust has undertaken a full data protection audit and have ensured that appropriate changes that have been made to data protection rules and regulations have been adhered to in full. The Evolve Trust has carried out all additional compliance requirements and fully accepts their duty of care to ensure individuals' data is kept safe and secure, resulting in increased compliance in our systems, processes and policies.



Introduction

The Brunts Academy: Supporting the progress and wellbeing of Looked After Children

Policy

The Brunts Academy recognises its responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and educational development of Looked After Children. Aspirational outcomes are sought for all students, including Looked After Children. It is important that Looked after Children be given the resources and support to achieve in all areas of their development, and that any co-existing barriers be supported alongside their needs as a Looked After Child.

This Looked After Children Policy will be reviewed by the Pupils and Personnel Committee of the Scrutiny and Advisory board.

Date of last review: November 2021

Date of next review: July 2023

Key personnel

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Link for Looked After Children		
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children at Brunts	Yasmin Ensor	YEnsor@brunts.evolvetrust.org
Head of Virtual School	Jasmin Howell	virtualschool@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

The Brunts Academy Policy for Supporting Looked After Children takes into account statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education and local guidance issued by Notts County Council. These duties and responsibilities, as set out within the Education Act 2002 sec 175 (Duties of LEAs and Scrutiny and Advisory Board's in relation to the welfare of children), the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children – statutory guidance, DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 are incorporated into this policy.

We will ensure that those who corporately parent Looked After Children are made aware of our responsibilities and how we will safeguard and promote the education and welfare of Looked After Children through the publication of this policy.

Background

Children who are looked after by a Local Authority experience a number of interlocking educational disadvantages. Some are external: the experience of frequently disrupted schooling, the lack of opportunities to acquire basic skills. Others are emotional: experience of trauma, low self-esteem, attachment issues.

Without additional support and intervention Looked After Children may experience:



- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Poorer attendance and higher exclusion rates
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement and wellbeing of such vulnerable children, who may *also* face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled.

Definitions around Children Looked After by the local authority

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology.

The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after children' (LAC). The term Child in Care (CiC) is also used interchangeably with LAC.

Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements.

For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives, or even with parents – under supervision of Children's Services

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children's home, or
- In a residential school

A private foster carer is someone *other than* a parent or a close relative who cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, in agreement with the child's parent. It applies only to children under 16 years, or under 18 if they are disabled.

A private fostering arrangement is not a when a child is Looked After by the Local Authority or placed in any residential home, hospital or school. Whilst children subject to Private Fostering arrangements are not recorded as Looked After within the Academy setting, they will be viewed as potentially vulnerable by virtue of their living arrangements and will be monitored in the same way as other vulnerable children.

Information on private fostering arrangements can be seen in Appendix 1



A child's status will clearly be recorded on their electronic confidential log.

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day-to-day decisions is often delegated to the carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

This information will be recorded clearly on the Personal Education Plan (PEP) at the induction meeting.

It is also important to recognise that children with Post –LAC status may have similar needs to those of a Looked After Child. Although the statutory framework with social care may not be in place, the Academy recognises the need for additional support and will review each case individually and ensure support is available. Families will be encouraged to apply for Pupil Premium Plus funding to support the education of Post-LAC children.

The pupil premium plus grant can be awarded to pupils who were looked after by an English or Welsh local authority immediately before being adopted, or who left local authority care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order).

The Policy Objectives:

To promote the educational achievement and wellbeing of Looked After Children on the roll of the Academy.

School culture around Looked After Children

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children should support staff to promote a culture in which Looked After Children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.

To create a positive ethos around Looked After Children everyone involved should:

- have high expectations of Looked After Children's involvement in learning and educational progress
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences.
- Ensure lesson planning is sensitive to the child's experiences areas which may trigger anxiety or distress are carefully considered e.g. family, Mother's day, genetic inheritance etc.
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a Looked After Child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children, but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving
- Understand how important it is to see Looked After Children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers
- Appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After

Every school must have a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.



The Designated Teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every Looked After Child on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised. The culture of the school should furthermore lead to the belief that Looked After Children can succeed and aspire to further and higher education.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children in the Academy should have lead responsibility for:

- Ensuring staff are clear on which children are Looked After and have enough information about their situation to ensure their needs are sensitively met.
- Ensuring that each Looked After Child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which supports their needs and is sufficiently aspirational, and this is shared with key school staff and agencies, and is produced in collaboration with the child.
- Supporting staff to understand the things which can affect how Looked After Children learn and achieve. This includes ensuring that staff have a basic knowledge of attachment and trauma on behaviour and learning and understanding of the need for positive systems of support within the school, to overcome them.
- Ensuring that members of staff who teach the Looked After Children on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the target setting at the Personal Educational Planning meeting, and this is shared with staff.
- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put Looked After Children at a disadvantage.
- Liaising with the member of school staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Plan
- To attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews.
- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services, and to develop effective communication with Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan or ePEP is congruent with the child's Care Plan.
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and carers, including ensuring LAC children have a suitable induction and onward transition.

Role of Scrutiny and Advisory Board in Supporting Looked After Children

The appointment of a Designated Teacher in accordance with the Regulations is a core function of the Scrutiny and Advisory Board.

The Scrutiny and Advisory Board should, in partnership with the head teacher, ensure that, through their training and development, the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked after children.

The Designated Teacher should be given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.

Scrutiny and Advisory Boards and the school leadership team should also make sure that the Designated Teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked after children to achieve.

The Scrutiny and Advisory Board should ensure that the Designated Teacher is a member of the teaching



staff with appropriate seniority, professional experience and status to provide leadership, training, information and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked after children. Where the Designated Teacher is not a member of the senior leadership team, a member of the team should be designated as a champion of looked after children issues to work closely with the designated teacher.

The Scrutiny and Advisory Board, in partnership with the head teacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working.

As part of the arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the role, Scrutiny and Advisory Boards should, as a minimum, receive an annual report from the designated teacher, but at The Brunts Academy it will be through Scrutiny and Advisory Board meetings. To protect a child's need for confidentiality, the report will not mention individual children by name.

The Scrutiny and Advisory Board and the ~~school~~ Academy leadership team should then consider what picture this information is providing and what needs to be done to address any issues raised by the reports in relation to:

- whether the designated teacher has sufficient time and resources to carry out their role effectively;
- any training, support and development needs required to ensure the role can be carried out effectively;
- the extent to which school policies take account of the particular needs of looked after children;
- whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, such as one-to-one tuition, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for looked after children to progress.

The Voice of a Looked After Child

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and any additional key workers should act as an advocate for Looked After Children. The views of Looked After Children should be heard and opportunities should be provided for these to be voiced privately, via formal 1:1 sessions as well as informally. Looked After Children need to be clear that all staff will support them and act on any concerns as their advocates, and be the link with outside agencies including their social worker and carer.

Looked After Children should always contribute to the PEP process and should attend review meetings as desired. The Academy should support arrangements for Children to be absent with authorisation for such meetings if necessary, although the Academy cannot take any responsibility for transporting children to reviews.

Attendance of Looked after Children

Th The Academy has robust attendance procedures. Looked After Children and Children for whom there are safeguarding concerns are the priority for first day response calls and will be electronically checked twice daily by the Attendance Team to ensure they have morning and afternoon session marks. Class Teachers will always complete registers in a prompt and accurate manner, in order to ensure checks can be completed by the Attendance Team in a timely manner. Where internal truancy is indicated by the register, class teachers will alert the Attendance Team as a matter of urgency. The Designated Teacher will always be informed by the Attendance Team of any absences, along with social workers and carers. The Police will be contacted where indicated.



The Designated Teacher will intervene if there is evidence of unauthorised absence from school or internal truancy in order to ascertain any difficulties and remove barriers. The Virtual school will be informed of all attendance or truancy issues.

Progress of Looked After Children

It is vital ensure that the educational achievement of each child is monitored, tracked and promoted and wherever possible, accelerated. There will be a number of stakeholders in this process:

- The class teacher who will ensure work is differentiated for the child and meets learning needs, assessed regularly to inform progress and sufficiently challenging.
- The Subject Leader who will overview the progress of all Looked After Children within the faculty and support class teachers to remove barriers to learning and accelerate learning.
- The Form Tutor, Head of Year, Designated Teacher and any additional key workers who will consider the holistic view by working together as a team to accelerate learning.
- The SENCO who will review and organise provision for any special educational needs which may be providing a barrier to learning.
- Progress will be recorded on an up to date Personal Education Plan or ePEP with SMART targets that will promote progress, and are linked to PP+ funding where relevant. This will be the responsibility of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, supported by any additional key workers.

Personal education plans (PEPs) and review processes

The Brunts Academy appreciates the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential.

It is vital that the targets set are SMART and aspirational. Targets should have clear links to PP+ funding as appropriate. The voice of the child is central in this process.

Use of Pupil Premium Plus Funding

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will advise on the most effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus during the Personal Education Planning meeting, or discuss this with any additional key workers if they are to attend, prior to the meeting. They will also ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus funding and any additional funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how the funding is spent and able to produce evidence of good progress and outcomes. Use of funding is negotiable within the meeting but it needs to link clearly to progress or it will not be released by the Virtual School.

Exclusions and Looked After Children

Every school does its best to avoid excluding children. In the case of Looked After Children it is even more important. Designated Teachers in partnership with others in the school and the school Scrutiny and Advisory Board as necessary should:

- ensure a suitable curriculum and behaviour support is implemented to avoid exclusion.
- be involved in any discussions related to decisions about potential exclusions of looked after children on roll



- make sure that the authority which looks after the child and the child's carers are involved in such a decision.

Data for exclusion rates within the school as a whole will be reviewed by the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children to identify trends in respect of Looked After Children.

Additional support

The Designated Teacher and SENCO should make sure that Looked After Children are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from interventions and one-to-one tuition and that they have access to academic focused study support. Courses around issues such as exam / assessment stress will be offered. Students will be readily engaged in Gifted and More Able programmes as indicated.

Referrals to other agencies e.g. counselling services will be made in consultation with the child, carer and social worker.

Children, Carers, Social Workers and the Virtual School will be involved in all SEND reviews, which if possible will be combined with PEP reviews.

Extra-Curricular activities

As Looked After Children may have lower self-esteem and confidence than their peers, they may need extra support to encourage participation in extracurricular activities. Funding should not be a barrier, as Pupil Premium Plus funds can be utilised. Discussion around extracurricular choices should be discussed with the child by the form tutor and at every PEP meeting, being a SMART Target where appropriate.

Some Looked After Children may need support to attend their first session. This should be arranged in a sensitive manner and in consultation with the child.

Travel arrangements for after school sessions should be confirmed ahead of time and should not be a barrier to attendance.

The Designated Teacher for Looked after Children and any additional key workers should fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

Communication around Looked After Children

It is important that all teaching staff at The Academy who are in contact with the child or young person is aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Headteacher or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After. Looked After Children often feel insecure when they have a cover teacher and leaders should be alert to this.

Good communication is essential between professionals. It is important to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g., if the school is considering a change of course, there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision e.g., behaviour or attendance. The Designated Teacher and any additional key workers will be the central point of contact in school for this information sharing, and all information sharing will be logged on the child's electronic file. Where possible, if information is to be shared about a Looked After Child, they should be made aware of what is to be shared and why.



Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g., end of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and the Virtual School, and where appropriate, the birth parents. A copy should also be attached to the child's PEP/ePEP.

School, education and social work colleagues within Children's Services should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual ~~Statement or~~ EHC plan Review and a Personal Education Plan or ePEP meeting or review. This is necessary to ensure the child does not feel overwhelmed by the number of meetings and the same information is not having to be repeatedly shared.

The Designated Teacher for Looked after Children will be responsible for providing data reports on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school roll to the Virtual School and Scrutiny Board as requested.

Carers are a vital component of the education of a Looked After Child. Communication mechanisms will be clarified upon admission, ensuring that quality communication is established in both directions.

Transition and Admission

It is vital that Looked After Children have a school placement. The Brunts Academy and key staff within each school will endeavour to ensure that once places have been granted, Looked After Children start to attend without delay. A gradual induction period may be used where advised by the Virtual School if this meets the child's needs, but in general, full-time education is to be expected and maintained.

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school (including up to date baseline data) and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility.

This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan (PEP). Contact arrangements will be clarified at this meeting including who to call first in an emergency, the signing of consent letters and arrangements for providing school reports and progress evenings.

Information will be shared with key staff on a need to know basis and a buddy system will be set up if needed to socially support the child. Wherever possible, subject option choices will be matched. Where this is not possible an alternative will be agreed.

When Looked After Students leave the Academy – either as part of post-16 transition or due to an unavoidable school change, contact will be made with the new educational establishment. Records will be transferred quickly and securely (and by hand wherever possible), and requiring a receipt. A copy of the file will be archived for future reference.

Careers advice and post 16 planning

All students receive careers guidance at The Brunts Academy. Looked After Children may need extra support, and so will receive a bespoke programme of 1:1 careers advice, from the start of Year 9 with the Academy careers adviser to devise a careers action plan, which will contribute to their Looked After Pathway plan.

Monitoring of this plan will be part of the PEP process and shared with carers, social workers and virtual school.

In secondary settings, Year 11 students will be made aware of the Post 16 bursary for Looked After



Children.

Monitoring of Academy Provision for Looked After Children

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will report to the Scrutiny and Advisory Board, on the progress of Looked After Children and any barriers to learning. Progress reports to the Virtual school and data returns will be returned promptly. Regular meetings (no less than half termly) will take place with the Achievement Officer for Looked after Children from the Virtual school .

All provision funded by PP+ will be tracked for impact. Staff are required to complete tracking documents to evidence progress being made and justify the PP+ spend.

Classroom teachers will be held accountable for providing accurate feedback and ensuring the correct interventions are in place . It is the responsibility of all staff to flag any concerns about a Looked After Child at the earliest opportunity.

See appendix 3 checklist for good practice.

Training opportunities

It is the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE, other research or policy surround Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher should ensure staff have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, virtual school heads in local authorities and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.

Strategic development within the school

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children should track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the school's development plan. The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children should also ensure that strategic development within the school considers the needs of Looked After Children, including curriculum planning and policy production.

Appendix 1 - Private Fostering Guidance for Schools

Schools play an essential role in identifying privately fostered children. Although most children in private fostering situations are likely to be safe, in some private fostering arrangements there are clear safeguarding issues and children and young people effectively have no one who is concerned for their safety or welfare.

This guidance aims to raise the awareness of the role of education professionals in highlighting cases of private fostering and safeguarding children at risk.

What is a private fostering arrangement?



A private foster carer is someone *other than* a parent or a close relative who cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, in agreement with the child's parent. It applies only to children under 16 years, or under 18 if they are disabled.

A private fostering arrangement is not a when a child is Looked After by the Local Authority or placed in any residential home, hospital or school.

Private foster carers can be part of the child's wider family, a friend of the family, the parents of the child's boyfriend or girlfriend or someone unknown but willing to foster the child. A cousin, great aunt or a co-habitee of a mother or father would therefore be a private foster carer.

Close relatives - a grandparent, a brother or sister, an aunt or an uncle, a step parent - are *not* private foster carers.

Who may be privately fostered?

This list is by no means exhaustive and indicates the scale and variety of situations and agencies these arrangements can cover:

- Children whose parents are unable to care for them, for example if they have chronic ill health or are in prison;
 - Children sent to this country, for education or health care, by parents who live overseas;
 - A child living with a friend's family because they don't get on with their own family;
 - Children living with a friend's family because of their parents' study or work;
 - Children staying with another family because their parents have separated or divorced;
 - Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend;
 - Children from abroad who attend a language school or mainstream school in the county and are staying with host families;
 - Children at boarding schools who do not return to their parents in the holidays but stay with 'host families' recruited by 'education guardians';
 - Unaccompanied asylum seeking minors who are living with friends, relatives or strangers.
-
- Children who are trafficked into the UK are especially vulnerable and are often living in de facto private fostering arrangements. Child trafficking is the movement of children for exploitation, including domestic servitude, commercial sexual exploitation and to support benefit claims (see www.ecpat.org.uk for further information). Where trafficking is suspected, a safeguarding referral should be made to Nottinghamshire MASH.

What to do if you are aware of a private fostering arrangement:

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Services as soon as possible. However, parents and carers often do not tell professionals or agencies about such arrangements; they may not be aware that they need to (and this may apply particularly to new communities in the UK such as migrant families from new-EU states), or they chose not to tell agencies about these arrangements.



Children's Services are not involved in making private fostering arrangements but are responsible for checking that the arrangements are suitable for the child. As a professional it is important for you to notify Children's Services if you are in contact with a child or young person who is being privately fostered. This will help protect the child against abuse or neglect and provide some reassurance that the child is being looked after properly.

Signs to watch out for

- Has someone else started collecting a child from school on a regular basis?
- Has a child mentioned to you that they are staying with someone else or that their parent(s) have gone away for a long time?
- Is there something unusual or unclear in the child's administration file? This may include copies of passports, visas and other immigration related documents which are unclear or do not clearly show that the child has rights of residence in the UK, or that it is unclear who has parental responsibility for the child.

What schools can do:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the definition of private fostering and the Local Authority's responsibilities when such arrangements occur;
- Look at admission files to check on the home situation, and make a note to follow up any circumstances which are not clear.
- Whenever staff become aware of private fostering arrangements they should notify the Senior Designated Professional for safeguarding (SDP);
- The SDP or another appropriate member of staff should speak to the families of children who might be involved in private fostering and check that they are aware of their duty to notify the Local Authority of the arrangement. School staff should actively encourage the parents and/or carer to notify Children's Services of the arrangement

If you believe that a private fostering arrangement has not been reported to Nottingham Social Care you should contact them directly:

Nottinghamshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub 0300 500 8090
[Mon-Thurs: 08.30am -5pm, Fri: 08.30-14]
Emergency Duty out of hours Team 0300 456 4546

If you suspect that a child who is living in a private fostering arrangement is being harmed or is at risk of significant harm (including suspecting that a child may be trafficked) and urgent action is required, follow your Child Protection procedures as laid out in this Child Protection Policy.

What happens after the Local Authority is notified?

When the Local Authority receives notification about a private fostering arrangement, the Notts MASH Team will arrange for an officer to visit the child within seven working days. They will contact the parent or person with parental responsibility, run checks on the carer and talk to the young person. This will be to ensure the young person is happy, safe and thriving in the arrangement and that they are able to access education, medical care and any other services they may need. The Local Authority will also check that the



accommodation is safe and suitable and enable the carer to access suitable training if required. Providing everything is in order, the family will continue the arrangement with the social worker providing checks at regular intervals to ensure the young person is safe, happy and has access to all the services to meet their needs.

Further Guidance & Resources:

- <http://privatefostering.org.uk/>
- ['Child Trafficking and Private Fostering', ECPAT UK](#)



Appendix 2 - The role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children within the school

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 full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning. The most effective designated teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This involves, working with VSHs to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can 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 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;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs 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 or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

Designated teachers are also likely to have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by:

- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:
- they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
- there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
- there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning; or 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;
- when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and
- there are no barriers to Looked-After children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings).



- Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children;
 - are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
 - are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
 - are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
 - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and o can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
- Being a source of advice for teachers about:
 - differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and
 - the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.
- Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:
 - promote good home-school links; o support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and
 - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
- having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked after children’s PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary; and
- working closely with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to. When supporting previously looked-after children, designated teachers should be aware of the following: the VSH must provide information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of these children - this may be general information, including training opportunities, or information and advice on individual children at the request of their parents or designated teacher. The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child’s education, including any requests to the VSH for advice on meeting their individual needs.



Appendix 3 - Developing good practice: checklist of questions

This checklist should be reviewed by the Scrutiny and Advisory Board and SLT, alongside the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

Planning

- How will the school include raising the attainment of looked after children in the school improvement plan?
- What policies has the school developed that encourage collaboration with other agencies and services e.g. health professionals, CAMHS, school attendance services?
- What is the policy on professional development for all staff in contact with vulnerable children?
- How does the school assist local authorities with requests to provide data on attendance, attainment and exclusions?

Raising staff awareness

- What safeguards does the school have in place for sharing sensitive information about individual looked after children with relevant staff members?
- What is the procedure for liaising with carers/residential children's homes and social services to ensure that the school has relevant information about a child's care history?
- How are the child's achievements communicated to the carer?

Admissions

- How are applications handled after the normal admission round?
- What are the arrangements for welcoming new (looked after) pupils and do they take into account that looked after children (perhaps arriving mid-term) may have additional support needs?
- What does the school do to ensure that new admissions are well supported by their peers?
- How does the school provide information to carers and social workers about the school's admission and appeal process?
- Who liaises with other agencies to ensure that an education placement works?

Record keeping and transfer

- Who reviews and keeps the child's PEP up-to-date?
- Who updates school records with current addresses of carers, birth parents, social worker, etc.?
- What is the procedure to prepare information for transfer if a looked after child changes school?

Promoting inclusive schooling and good home-school communication

- How does the school record who is entitled to a child's report, receives invitation to parents' evenings and other school events?
- Are carers given a named person, such as the designated teacher, to contact if they have concerns?
- Are carers asked to sign the home school agreement even when their child may be placed temporarily in the school?
- What steps have been taken to ensure that carers have understood and signed the home school agreement?
- Does the school charging policy need to be changed to ensure better take-up of trips among groups of children, such as those who are looked after?
- Are a range of study support and out-of-school opportunities such as homework clubs, careers



guidance and work experience available to looked after children even if they join school mid-year?

Promoting inclusive schooling: curriculum and options

- Have the needs of looked after children been considered in the context of the school's curriculum policy?
- What is the process when making a decision to place a young person on an alternative curriculum? Does the school always consult relevant professionals, the young person and his or her carers?
- Is flexible personalised learning available to Looked After children?
- Does the school have a good baseline of information – informed by transfer of school records and thorough assessments – so that barriers to learning are quickly identified and actions are put in place to secure each pupil's progress?
- Is the school timetable flexible with regard to outside fixed activities?

Promoting high expectations and achievement

- What targets are there for looked after children in the school?
- Does the school include measures of individual children's progress?
- What are the specific barriers to achievement facing looked after children and can the school take action to remove them?
- Is there good liaison with foster carers and children's homes to support children's learning?
- If looked after children get behind, how is this identified and help provided?
- How does the school celebrate the educational successes of looked after children?
- Would regular access to a learning mentor help vulnerable children succeed?
- What revision support is available for assessments and examinations for children at risk of underachieving?
- How are looked after children encouraged and supported to attend these?
- How are looked after children encouraged and supported to access taster activities, including for further and higher education?
- Are looked after children engaged in the gifted and more able programme?

SEN

- How does the school ensure prompt identification of special educational needs of looked after children?
- Are carers informed that the child has special educational needs and that they can get help from the Nottinghamshire Ask Us Service?
- How are carers/social workers involved in assessments and reviews?
- How are young people involved in reviews and target setting?
- Is the level of support given to Looked After children with special educational needs sufficient considering their status?
- Are there particular staff training needs in connection with meeting the needs of looked after children?

Exclusions

- When considering exclusion, does the head teacher and the Scrutiny and Advisory Board have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance on Exclusion, Improving Behaviour and Attendance?
- Is there any trend in exclusion rates of looked after children?
- What strategies does the school use to avoid exclusion of vulnerable children including looked after children?



children?

- Is the appeal process fully explained to social workers and foster carers when a looked after child is excluded?
- Are young people in care encouraged to attend hearings which are reviewing their exclusion?
- Does the head teacher's letter of exclusion always signpost carers to the ACE exclusion helpline?
- Has the appropriate person/team in the local authority with responsibility for children missing education been notified of the child's exclusion?
- Does the school take vulnerable children, such as looked after children, excluded from other schools?
- What are the reintegration arrangements for looked after children who have been excluded?
- What other agencies are working with the child and have they delivered the necessary support e.g. clinical psychology/CAMHS?
- Where a looked after child is at risk of exclusion does his or her PEP include pastoral support provision?

Promoting health

- Are the needs of looked after children considered in health-promoting schemes
- Do the citizenship and PSHE curricula take full account of including children whose experiences and understanding of 'family' may be different?

Pastoral support

- What targeted interventions can the school initiate that focus on groups of children who have known risk factors, such as being in care?
- How does the school behaviour policy pre-empt escalating behaviour problems?
- How does the school ensure that initiatives such as lunchtime clubs and anti-bullying work include specific vulnerable groups such as looked after children?
- Does the school have procedures for contacting relevant professional help for specific problems, e.g. local authority **Behavioural Support** teams, CAMHS, educational psychologist?
- Are carers contacted on the first day of any unexplained absence?
- Is the Scrutiny and Advisory Board aware of additional funding streams?
- Are carers aware of the school's anti-bullying policies?

Study support

- Could a study support programme be more flexible to cater for the needs of looked after children?
- Does the school regularly consult with carers and looked after children about study support activities?
- Is the school in contact with the local authority study support co-ordinator to discuss ideas?
- Is one-to-one tuition provided for every looked after child

