



POLICY ON THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Plantsbrook Learning Trust is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfE Circular 0269/2000 and DfE/DOH Guidance 2000. The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- prioritising education
- having high expectations
- inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes
- achieving continuity and stability
- early intervention – priority action and
- listening to children.

The Guidance introduced two key measures, in order to improve multi-agency co-ordination and improve educational life chances for Looked After Children:

- Designated Teachers for every school
- Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children.

Plantsbrook Learning Trust is committed to ensuring that Designated Teachers and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

The Designated Teacher is committed to implementing the practice established in the Department for children, schools and families statutory guidance for school governing bodies 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Looked After Children'.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

The Designated Teacher should:

- work in partnership with Achievement Co-ordinators, pastoral staff and classroom teachers
- be an advocate for Looked After Children
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed, as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, where in place. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any Individual Educational Plan (IEP), ITP (Individual targeted plan), Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), Education Health Care Plan (EHC), career plan or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed, concurrently with the Care Plan, i.e. within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every school term
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings
- liaise with LACES in regard to assessment and attendance. For some local authorities, including Birmingham, this may take the form of an ePEP
- ensure that each Looked After child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's wishes and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher)

- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

- Ensure that any Looked After child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- respond positively to Looked After child's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate
- as with all children, ensure that no Looked After child is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- positively promote the self esteem of Looked After Children.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF PLANTSBROOK LEARNING TRUST

Plantsbrook Learning Trust will:

- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children
- be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names)
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher in each school for Looked After Children
- liaise with the Headteachers to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children
- support the Headteachers, Designated Teachers and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met
- nominate a Governor who links with the Designated Teacher of each school, receives termly progress reports and provides feedback to the Local Governing Body. These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons. The named Governor for Looked After Children, Child Protection and Equality of Opportunity is currently Mr G Blackman
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

TRAINING

The Headteacher of each school within the Trust, Designated Teacher and Professional Development Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.