

 Kingsmead		
Kingsmead Academy T/A Kingsmead School	POLICY TITLE:	Looked After Children
Committee/Person Responsible for Policy:	Senior Assistant Headteacher (Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare)	
Date Approved by Governing Body:	February 2017	
Date of Last Review:	Spring 2017	
Next Review Due:	Spring 2018	

Who are ‘Looked After Children’?

When referring to ‘Looked After Children’, this policy is using the legal term ‘Looked After’ in relation to a provision made under the Children’s Act 1989 in England and Wales, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 whereby a local authority / Health and Social Care Trust has obligations to provide for, or share, the care of a child or young person under 16 years of age where parent(s) or guardian(s) for whatever reason are prevented from providing them with a suitable accommodation or care.

A child or Young person is ‘looked after’ if he or she is provided with continuous accommodation for more than 24 hours, or if they are subject to certain provisions such as a Care Order or a Placement Order.

The governing body of Kingsmead School is fully committed to providing the very best support to all students to enable them to reach their full potential.

We are committed to enabling all students to equally access the best teaching, learning and student support networks to allow them to take every opportunity to achieve the very best academic and personal outcomes.

Core Values

Care: All members of the school community aspire to provide Looked after Children with the appropriate care in order that they thrive in school.

Respect: All members of the school community nurture respect for Looked after Children. This is central in ensuring they achieve their full potential.

Determination: All members of the school community will endeavor to enable Looked after Children to foster the determination needed to achieve their best, enjoy school and benefit from a wide range of social and extra-curricular opportunities.

Aspiration: All students, including Looked after Children, have the right to be supported in

realising their potential. The school is fully committed to the objectives outlined in this policy that will provide the additional support needed to ensure Looked after Children have high academic and social aspirations.

This policy is designed to set out some of the guiding principles to enable Looked after Children to achieve their very best at Kingsmead School. The policy also sets out the responsibilities of key bodies/ personnel, including the governing body, the designated teacher, and the whole school staff. We fully embrace our responsibility to:

'Safeguard Looked After Children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure they are able to achieve and reach their full potential'. (Section 52, The Children Act 1989, amended by The Children and Families Act 2004.)

Context

It is, unfortunately, widely recognised that Looked after Children typically achieve poorer outcomes at school nationally than their peers. This gap seems to be narrowing and improving over time, but there is significant evidence that the gap in attainment both at the end of key Stage 2 and at the end of key Stage 4 is marked.

These significant gaps are exacerbated by recent evidence that suggests Looked after Children are up to eight times more likely to be permanently excluded from mainstream schools than their peers. (*Outcomes for Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England – SFR 50/2013 – December 2013*)

All governors and staff at Kingsmead School are fully committed to significantly narrowing these gaps, and if possible eradicating them altogether.

Guiding Principles

In order to achieve the aims of narrowing or eradicating the gaps between the achievement of Looked after Children (LAC) and their peers, this policy outlines a set of guiding principles that will inform best practice. As such, the governing body and staff at Kingsmead School will fully support working with/ supporting Looked after Children by:

1. Doing the things we do for all young people – but more so for Looked after Children.
2. Balancing high levels of support with real challenge, and a relentless focus on high expectations.
3. Enabling young people (LAC) to engage in and take responsibility for their learning.
4. Skillfully linking each Young Person (LAC) to a key person they relate well to.
5. Making it a priority to know the young person (LAC) well and to build strong relationships.
6. Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies.
7. Making things happen and seeing things through.
8. Swiftly intervening if any 'problems' emerge, such as those linked with behavior or attendance.
9. Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility.
10. Actively extending the horizons of each young person (LAC) including engagement in after school activities and learning outside of the classroom.
11. Closely monitor the academic, social and personal progress of all young people (LAC).
12. Planning for future transitions.

All of these principles should be grounded in an ethos that provides a unified but **low profile** support in school for any Looked after Child, so that they are not made to feel different from other children.

These principles are broadly based on the twin documents:

- Looked after children: good practice in schools (Ofsted report 2008): <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/looked-after-children-good-practice-schools>
- 'Improving the attainment of Looked after Children in Secondary Schools' DCSF 2009. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-attainment-of-looked-after-children-in-secondary-schools-guidance-for-schools>

Responsibilities of Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to understand the context affecting the progress of Looked after Children, as well as embracing the guiding principles that we hope will support them to achieve their very best.

All staff need to understand that Looked after Children may present specific challenges at school, but will also need specific kinds of support, advice and guidance.

The Roles and Responsibilities outlined below should support the successful provision for Looked after Children at Kingsmead School:

Governing Body

In order to provide outstanding support for Looked after Children, the governing body will:

- ❑ Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises children looked after according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ❑ Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked after Children
- ❑ Ensure there is a designated teacher for Looked after Children
- ❑ Liaise with the headteacher, designated teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked after Children are met
- ❑ Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the designated teacher
- ❑ Receive regular reports from the designated teacher which should include
 - the number of Looked after Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan
 - their attendance, compared to other pupils
 - their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils
 - the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school
- ❑ Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked after Children equal access in respect of
 - Admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations both academic and vocational
 - Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
 - Work experience and careers guidance
- ❑ Annually, review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked after Children.

Designated Teacher (Mo Colley)

- ❑ Be an advocate for Looked after Children
- ❑ Attend relevant training for Looked after Children
- ❑ Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and individuals in relation to Looked after Children seeking advice from Somerset's Children Looked after Advisory Teachers when appropriate.
- ❑ Ensure that all Looked after Children receive a positive reintegration on entering the school
- ❑ Ensure that all Looked after Children have an appropriate Personal Education Plan and

that it is completed within 14 days of joining the school or of entering care (see Somerset's Guidance on Personal Education Plans)

- ❑ Keep Personal Education Plans and other records up to date and reviewed appropriately
- ❑ Convene an urgent multi professional meeting if a Looked after Child is experiencing difficulties or at risk of exclusion.
- ❑ Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential/personal information on a need to know basis.
- ❑ Act as the key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked after Children.
- ❑ Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- ❑ Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for Looked after Children
- ❑ Ensure speedy transfer of information when a Looked after Child transfers into another educational placement.
- ❑ Contribute information to CLA reviews when required.
- ❑ Provide regular reports to the Governing Body regarding CLA in the school and relevant policy and practice development.

Whole School Staff

- ❑ Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked after Children
- ❑ Positively promote the raising of a Looked after Child's self esteem
- ❑ Ensure 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 Personal Education Plans, and review meetings
- ❑ Respond positively to the request to be a Looked after Child's named person
- ❑ Liaise with the designated teachers where a Looked after Child is experiencing difficulties
- ❑ Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions as a last resort, in line with Somerset's exclusion advice
- ❑ Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals
- ❑ Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals as appropriate.

Appendix 1 - Useful resources and external organisations

- The Who Cares? Trust: <http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/>
- The National Children's Bureau: <http://www.ncb.org.uk/>
- Attachment Aware Schools programme: a new partnership between Bath and North East Somerset Council and Bath Spa University: <http://attachmentawareschools.com/>
- Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire: <http://www.sdqinfo.com/>
- The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children (Ofsted report 2012): <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/impact-of-virtual-schools-educational-progress-of-looked-after-children>
- Education Matters in Care: A report by the independent cross-party inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children in England: http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/Education_Matters_in_Care_September_2012.pdf
- Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework) and reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection>
- Looked after children: good practice in schools (Ofsted report 2008): <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/looked-after-children-good-practice-schools>
- The White Paper, *Care matters: time for change*, June 2007, can be downloaded from; www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/
The report from the Best Practice in Schools Working Group, led by Professor Dame Pat Collarbone, can also be downloaded from this website.
- Research and statistics relating to looked after children can be found at; www.ttrb.ac.uk/ELibrarianQuestionDetails.aspx?QuestionId=262
- The Department for Children, Schools and Families 'Find Out More' website for articles and research can be found at; http://findoutmore.dfes.gov.uk/2006/10/lookedafter_chi.html and www.children.gov.uk/cgi-bin/rsgateway/textsearch.pl?charset=utf-8&col=rsgate&la=en&qt=september&st=91&type=next10
- All Office of the Children's Director for England reports of the views of looked after children can be found on the children's website; www.rights4me.org
- For publications and guidance see; www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4005321
- Review of international research; www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0056.asp
- Looked After Children Professional Network; www.youngminds.org.uk/professionals/partnerships/looked-after-children-1
- The role of parents is explored in *Parents, carers and schools* (070018), Ofsted, 2007; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070018
- The role of governors is explored in *Supporting looked after learners: a practical guide for school governors* (DfES-1929-2005), DfES, 2005; <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-1929-2005&>
- The views of looked after children are explored further in two reports published by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in March 2007: *About education*

www.rights4me.org/reportview.cfm?id=111 *by children*;
<http://www.rights4me.org/reportview.cfm?id=112>

Other Resources

Academy admission request form for looked after children:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-admission-request-form-for-looked-after-children>

Outcomes for looked after children by local authorities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outcomes-for-children>