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# LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

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## Introduction

Chiltern Hills Academy is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We encourage every person in our community to:

### **Create, Aspire and Excel to 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)**

We achieve this through our dedication to the seven Christian values of love, hope, self-discipline, compassion, forgiveness, respect and honesty.

We are a community in which staff, students and parents work collaboratively to develop a learning environment and organisation which is spiritual, safe, innovative, creative and exciting. All members of the Academy are motivated and inspired by the vision to give their best and to play a full part in the life of the school and in their own developing lives.

The Governors at Chiltern Hills Academy are committed to achieving the vision and values. They oversee and monitor this policy to ensure that this is being achieved.

The following documents have been used to support those that are Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1100188/Promoting\\_the\\_health\\_and\\_well-being\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_August\\_2022\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1100188/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children_August_2022_update.pdf)

<https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/behaviour-wellbeing/virtual-school/guidelines-for-looked-after-children/>

## Background

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care / children looked after and drew attention to:

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

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement 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. All schools should have a policy for Looked After Children that is subject to review and approval by the Governing Body. The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of looked after children by a local authority but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress.

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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) or children in care. 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

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Governors (2009) and the Buckinghamshire Policy Statement on Looked After Children and should be read in conjunction with it. The following guidance was used in developing this policy. <https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/behaviour-wellbeing/virtual-school/guidelines-for-looked-after-children/>.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH).

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 foster 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.

## **Policy Objective**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Childrent (PLAC) on the roll of the school.

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## **Name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children**

Mrs Jo Conway

## **Name of the Designated School Governor for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children**

Mrs Chandra Adams. At Chiltern Hills Academy we will create an environment where looked after children and previously looked after children have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the DfE Guidance Document for Designated Teachers - February 2018.

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for Looked After Children and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that Looked After Children experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise.

Our school community aims to champion the needs of Looked After Children to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care.

## **Our Aims for Looked After Children**

- to provide a safe and secure environment where education is always central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children
- to narrow the gap between the attainment of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress
- that they benefit from school-based interventions, , even if they do not meet the criteria for that and to use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- for all Looked After Children to have a minimum of three Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress
- for all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with one key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school
- that school systems facilitate discrete support, as appropriate
- Looked After Children will be advantaged within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for
- Looked After Children and their foster families will feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed into the community in recognition of the particular needs of this group

## **Educational Planning for Looked After Children**

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### CHILTERN HILLS ACADEMY

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## **Personal Education Plans (ePEP))**

The school will ensure that every Looked After Child on roll has a Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role. They will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receives appropriate training.

## **The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Jo Conway**

She is a qualified teacher and a senior member of staff and will promote improved educational life chances for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children by:

- ensuring that the Looked After Child or Previously Looked After Child has access to quality first teaching
- tracking the progress of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book reviews
- ensuring that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of Looked After Children
- providing and attending training and offering advice to all school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and school resource and staff training needs for working with this group
- prioritising Looked After Children for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria
- ensuring that Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- ensuring that carers and care staff are engaged with the targets outlined in the PEP

**All staff** will promote improved educational life chances for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children by:

- reading the school policy for Looked After Children
- attending training, as appropriate
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher

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- referring to the Designated Teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating a 'Looked After Children-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for Looked After Children by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available

## **Attendance**

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention, as outlined in the attendance policy.

## **Admissions/ Transitions**

School procedures to support Looked After Children during admission and transition include:

- prioritising Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children at the point of admission
- the swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support and planning for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

## **Additional Educational Needs - The Graduated Approach**

All Staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress each academic year, as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, ePEP and CLASEF

## **Special Educational Needs**

All Staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children who have special educational needs by:

- adhering to graduated approach as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice
- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year (in line with the expectation set out in the ePEP and CLASEF)
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic

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- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Designated Teacher and SENDCO monitor delivery of interventions and review outcomes with class teacher
- where an EHCP is in place, PEPs and EHCP should be aligned to avoid duplication

## **Safeguarding**

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children by: familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' document (September 2022), if there are any safeguarding concerns.

## **Alternative Provision**

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision, alternative to daily attendance at school, will be:

- a plan that will retain the Looked After Children on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall ePEP for the student
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that ePEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

## **Exclusion**

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a Looked After Child, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children. (Ref: Guidance for maintained schools, and pupil referral units in England. September 2022))

## **Multi-Agency Working**

School staff will engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This should include: Virtual Schools, Social Care, health, carers. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.

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## **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed when there are changes in the law or annually to assess implementation and effectiveness.

This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.