

Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

Contents

1. Key Staff	1
2. Roles and Responsibilities	1
3. Appendix 1 – LAC Designated Teacher Job Description	4

1. Key Staff

Principal (Matt Robertson)

Designated Teacher (Ian Oliphant)

Support Team for LAC (Pauline McLeod and Jen Brennan)

Link Governor for LAC (Nikki Anderson)

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Arnold Hill Spencer Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- As Governors and staff of Arnold Hill Spencer Academy, we aim to:
 - make a real difference in helping to provide the best possible education for looked after children as much as any other;
 - seek to give our young people in care professional help, encouragement and support, so they find our Academy a welcoming and friendly place;
 - be fully inclusive and we will challenge negative views and stereotypes;
 - offer support to and work with their foster carers on how to assist the young person’s learning and enhance educational opportunities.
- We will support the Government’s agenda for giving all looked after children the same life chances as any other child, in that we want them to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and achieve economic well-being.
- The Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children 2015, (updated 2018) place duty on us to work together to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. We recognise that schools and staff working in schools are at the very heart of this process so that we can provide a good education to unlock a bright future and so increase life chances for this vulnerable group. We are highly ambitious for these young people, knowing that securing the best possible progress for them will greatly enhance their life chances.
- We recognise our responsibilities as governors and staff, and we actively want to support the local authority in undertaking its statutory responsibility, under section 52 of the Children Act 2004. This is to help this vulnerable group to succeed in education, champion their needs, raise awareness and challenge negative assumptions at all levels.
- As school Governors and staff we are aware we can make a significant difference. We recognise that we have a key role and major influence to ensure that the needs of looked after children are considered at the improvement planning and policy level through to monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes.

6. As a governing body we will introduce a monitoring procedure where we will look closely at the progress that looked after children are making in our Academy, through a named Governor and identify if there are barriers to their next steps of learning and progress.
7. We will introduce an annual reporting cycle on the progress and performance of looked after children, to be presented to the full governing body by our appointed Designated Teacher during the autumn term meeting of each academic year as a standing agenda item.
8. As a governing body we will require our Designated Teacher to carry out the specific duties below in relation to the looked after children attending this school. (And see appendix 1 – job description)
9. We will require our appointed Designated Teacher to undertake the recommendations set down in the statutory guidance entitled The Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children (PLAC). Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities Feb 2018. In this context the Designated Teacher will:
 - become the central point of contact at this school for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the individual looked after children we have on roll;
 - take the lead role in the professional assessment and preparation of the educational targets and subsequent reviews to be recorded into the relevant sections of the child's Personal Education Plan. The PEP should be established within twenty Academy working days for any looked after child starting on roll. This to include the gradual addition and updating of further information over time e.g. attendance, attainment and academic and wider progress;
 - attend relevant update training, working with the relevant local authority and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding looked after children;
 - ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account;
 - establish good working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews;
 - provide support and sanctuary to help settle a looked after child into the Academy, and at other times;
 - ensure that the looked after child feels safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support;
 - ensure the timely transfer of records if a looked after child moves school, in line with statutory guidance identified in KCSIE 2021 (i.e. within 5 working days) AND ensure verbal contact is made with the new host DT and/or DSL in advance so that effective support is in place on arrival. This process should include working closely with the child's social worker and the Virtual School.
 - provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required;
 - seek and prioritise meetings with, and referrals to, appropriate external agencies in situations that require external support.
10. In addition, we will require our Academy Teaching and Support Staff to assist in the implementation and support of this policy for looked after children by requiring all staff to:
 - ensure the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained;
 - be familiar with, and respond appropriately to, requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews;
 - respond positively to any request by a child to be the person they want to talk with;
 - ensure that no child in care becomes the victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and eradicated;
 - positively promote the self-esteem of looked after children;
 - convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.
11. As a Governing Body we will endeavour to raise expectations for achievement of looked after children and encourage them to do well by combining high expectation and standards with inclusion.

12. We will consider and set appropriately challenging targets and in so doing facilitate the appropriate resources in order to support the child to reach those targets.
13. We will monitor and evaluate the impact of our school provision, teaching and learning and support for looked after children. The annual reporting cycle informs on the following key aspects of provision:
- the number of looked after children on roll;
 - attendance statistics for any authorised and unauthorised absence;
 - the frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion;
 - how they are performing in core subjects, their progress and any value added measure when compared against initial baseline assessment;
 - the frequency of them taking part in extra-curricular activities;
 - the attainment relative to the targets set in core and foundation subjects;
 - the provision arrangements for additional support identified to include 1:1 tuition at school and any externally added booster work provided in the care home;
 - the quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP.
14. We are aware that the OFSTED inspection framework will consider the provisions that we, as a whole school, have put in place to support looked after children. We understand that a judgement will be made within the OFSTED framework in terms of how far this Academy is able to support looked after young people. The formal report will include comments about the progress and support provided to these vulnerable young people.
15. At Arnold Hill, the designated safeguarding lead is also the Designated Teacher for looked after children. LAC are extremely vulnerable, the most common reason for children becoming looked after is because of abuse and/or neglect and the Academy is aware of the need to monitor the welfare and ensure the support of these children and those who are previously LAC
16. The Designated Teacher has details of the legal status of each looked after child's care arrangements and what the contact arrangements are with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will also know the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after each child.
17. The Designated Teacher will work with the virtual school head and the child's social worker to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan and to ensure their safety and security.
18. Some looked after children also have special educational needs and/ or disabilities. In these cases, our SENCO will be closely involved with the provision for this group.

Ratified by the Governing Body
Next review due by: October 2024

3. Appendix 1 – LAC Designated Teacher Job Description

All Staff read and sign to say they understand this role annually.

This role description is based on [statutory guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children](#). It is **not** a comprehensive list of all tasks that the Designated Teacher will carry out.

Main purpose

The Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children will take a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after and previously looked after child on our Academy's roll, and ensuring that their personal, emotional, and academic needs are prioritised.

They will also be the central point of initial contact within the school for the external agencies working with these students.

Duties and responsibilities

Ethos and culture

- Contribute to the development and review of whole-Academy policies and procedures so that they do not unintentionally put looked after and previously looked after children at a disadvantage (for example, procedures such as induction and transition)
- Promote a culture in which looked after and previously looked after children are:
 - Prioritised for academic support
 - Encouraged to actively participate in school life
 - Supported to succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs
 - Able to take ownership of their learning and have opportunities to discuss their progress
 - Able to discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner

Teaching and learning

- Set high expectations of looked after and previously looked after children's learning, and ensure teachers set targets that accelerate progress
- Advise teachers on differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for looked after or previously looked after children
- Advise on the use of assessment for learning approaches to improve the progress of these pupils, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning and their next steps

Looked after children with special educational needs

- Ensure that the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked after children, is being followed
- Where any looked after child has an education, health, and care (EHC) plan, monitor the student's personal education plan (PEP) to ensure it works in harmony with the EHC plan to set out how their needs are being met

Working with staff

- Ensure that they themselves, and other Academy staff, have strong awareness, training, and skills around the specific needs of looked after and previously looked after children and how to support them
- Work with the Academy's safeguarding team to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding these students are quickly and effectively responded to

Working with carers, parents, or guardians

- Promote good home-Academy links
- Support progress by ensuring 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
- How the school teaches skills such as reading and numeracy
- Encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfillment

Working with external agencies

- Build and maintain relationships with other professionals, in particular the virtual school head (VSH) and the local authority's SEND department, to ensure the Academy responds effectively to its students' needs
- Work with relevant professionals, including the VSH, to ensure that they (the Designated Teacher) and other Academy staff have the skills to identify signs of potential mental health issues among looked after and previously looked after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Work with relevant professionals, including social workers and school staff, to develop, monitor and review looked after students' personal education plans