

Introduction and Rationale

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is recognized nationally that LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion from school compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being, in line with Every Child Matters. The 1989 Children Act introduced the concept of Corporate Parenting – central to supporting and improving the education of children in public care.

“Corporate Parenting emphasises the collective responsibility of local authorities to achieve good parenting – the whole authority includes the Education Department as well as Social Services and schools also have a key role to play.”

The Children Act, 1989

This policy takes into account requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC:

- The Local Authority and Academy Trust's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- The School Admissions Code 2014
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).

We at St Martin's Academy recognise our responsibilities towards those members of the school community who fall within the category of Looked After Children (LAC).

Definition

In UK law, children in care are referred to as 'looked after children'. A child is 'looked after' if they are in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours. Legally, this could be when they are:

- Living in accommodation provided by the local authority with the parents' agreement.
- The subject of an interim or full care order or, in Scotland, a permanence order.
- The subject of an emergency legal order to remove them from immediate danger.
- In a secure children's home, secure training centre or young offender institution
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

This policy sets out the procedures we have based on the following principles.

- Prioritising education.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Early intervention and priority action.
- Listening to children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

St Martin's Academy will:

- Ensure a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below (see later).
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for every Looked After Child.
- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for Looked After Children.

The Designated Officer with responsibility for LAC is Emma Boynton
The designated governor with responsibility for LAC is Kate Vaughan

Roles and Responsibilities.

The Designated Teacher (Statutory)

The designated person must be a qualified teacher.

- Ensure that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them
- To promote positive support systems for Looked After children
- To maintain a detailed account of Looked After Children including information relating to current status, type of placement, name and contact details of Social Worker, relevant health information, SEN status, PEP information, current and historic assessment information
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed when a child enters the school and is then reviewed at least every 6 months – this should take into account the opinions of the social worker, class teacher, carers and where possible the child and their parents
- Co-ordinate support for the child in school, liaising where necessary with other professionals and carers
- To ensure education records are received/passed on if a Looked After child transfers school
- To monitor the educational progress, levels of attainment of Looked After children and to intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement
- To facilitate the child/young person being able to state to whom he/she would like information about his/her care status to be passed on
- To ensure that appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained for the child/young person
- To attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways, to Social Care Planning Meetings and/or statutory reviews
- To monitor attendance of Looked After Children, recording and reporting absence of 10 days or over to the Education Welfare Service
- produce at least one annual report which should include information on staff training, links with external agencies and for each child: current progress, attendance, exclusions (if any), concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented and whether the plans put in place are effective in addressing the learning needs of the child. The report should not mention any child's name.

Designated Governor

If responsible for the education of a looked after child, the designated school governor monitors policy and practice in school to ensure that:

- There is a designated teacher for children in local authority care and ensure that the designated staff member is given the appropriate level of support and has the opportunity to keep up to date with relevant training
- Ensure the designated staff member disseminates relevant training and provides support for all members of staff that will influence teaching and learning for Looked After Children.
- Ensure that the necessary provision is being made for any pupil who is a looked after child and that children in care have equal access to all aspects of school life, including the National Curriculum, assessments, careers guidance, extra curricular activities, work experience and additional educational support
- There is an ethos of support and acceptance in the school for children who do not live with their birth families
- Targets for children in care are realistic but aspirations for these pupils shall be high
- Where the child/young person is at risk of exclusion, or excluded, they shall be treated in the same way and offered the same support as any other pupil.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC.

All Staff

- To ensure appropriately high expectations of Looked After Children, to consider how extra academic and pastoral support can be provided for Looked After Children if it is needed and to ensure that Looked After Children have every opportunity to participate fully in school life
- To be aware that, for many Looked After Children, bullying is an issue; ensure that the school's anti-bullying policy operates
- To ensure there is sensitivity to the background of Looked After Children in teaching, especially in work on families and/or family trees and to respect the confidentiality of Looked After Children and ensure that any information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis

Funding

Looked after Children are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. The academy trust is committed to ensuring effective use of dedicated funding, where available, for all eligible Looked after Children on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes. All Looked after Children are entitled to one to one tuition in English and/or Mathematics even if they appear to be reaching expected levels. The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

School Admissions.

The Academy Trust believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC children. The School Admission Code 2014 which states that; 'All schools must have oversubscription criteria for each 'relevant age group' and the highest priority must be given, unless otherwise provided in this Code, to looked after children and all previously looked after children.'

Date Reviewed: November 2017

Date of next review: September 19

SIGNED HEAD of SCHOOL:

APPROVED BY (on behalf of the Academy Trust):