

# CHILDREN IN CARE POLICY

## Mission Statement

WeST holds a deep seated belief in education and lifelong learning. Effective collaboration, mutual support and professional challenge will underpin our quest to ensure that all of the children and adults we serve are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed in life.

Westcountry Schools' Trust reviewed this policy in May 2018.

Woodlands Park Primary Schools' Local Governing Board noted this policy on: 24 January 2019

This policy will be formally reviewed annually

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## INTRODUCTION

### Who are our Looked After Children?

**Children and young people become 'Looked After' either if they have been taken into Care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their natural parent(s). LAC will have a care manager who arranges their care plan.**

The Westcountry Schools Trust is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes.

The Trust Board recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of Looked After Children, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000 and DfEE/DOH Guidance 2000 and the Children Act (2006).

The Children Act 2006 places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential". The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of Trusts 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:

- To ensure designated Teachers are nominated in every school;
- To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all Looked After Children.

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

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

The Designated Teacher should:

- follow the statutory guidance contained within 'The roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children' (DfCS 2009);
- be an advocate for Looked After Children;
- ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for the child and carer/s (and parent/s where possible). Note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed (within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer/s (and parent/s if possible), in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any Individual Educational Plan (IEP), Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), career plan or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed;
- ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to;
- ensure entry to examinations for all Looked After Children;
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- make recommendations about how the Pupil Premium funding for looked after children should be spent to enable to the child to make good progress;

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- ensure staff, Directors and Governors receive relevant information and training;
- 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;
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADTEACHER

- Support the designated teacher to carry out their role including the provision of regular training.
- Monitor the progress of Looked After Children on a regular basis and report to the Local Governing Board termly.
- Ensure value for money in terms of Pupil Premium funding.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

- As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children.
- Ensure entry to examinations for Looked After Children.
- 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.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulty.

### ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BOARDS

The Local Governing Boards of the Westcountry Schools Trust schools will:

- ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions;
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- nominate a governor (the SEND governor) who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body;
- for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned;
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years;
- ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of:
  - ▶ Admission to school;
  - ▶ The National Curriculum and public examinations;
  - ▶ Additional educational support where this is needed. Extra curricular activities;
  - ▶ Work experience and careers guidance.

### TRAINING

The Headteacher and Designated Teacher and will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the guidance from the DfES and DoH (as above).

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.