

KWS Educational

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Version 5 Sep 2021

Approved by the Trustees

Review 2 years from date of approval.

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KWS aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

The Trustees are committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children and previously looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC.

NB: The term LAC will be used throughout to represent both LAC and Previously LAC.

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- Ensure that all LAC have access to broad and balanced curriculum
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
- Ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- Ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
- Ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

The designated teacher for LAC Susannah King and the Trustee with responsibility for LAC is Magdalena Nichols

Who are Looked After Children?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21)

The term “in care” refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are “accommodated” by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be “Looked After Children” – LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Admissions

The Trustees endorse LA policy which states that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter school mid-term. As with all pupils who are admitted to school mid-term we give them a positive welcome, and when necessary offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupils settle. We talk with other professionals involved and set out the appropriate schedule for beginning successfully at KWS.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Trustees will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC pupils.

Allocation of resources

The Trustees will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Monitoring the Progress and Attainment of LAC

It is the responsibility of the social worker for the LAC to initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of a child entering care or joining the school and to ensure that the relevant school staff and the child is actively involved. When a LAC is admitted to KWS we use information from their previous school and, when the child has had the time to settle in, our own teacher assessments to set targets.

The school monitors and tracks the achievement and attainment of all pupils at the end of each term including LAC. Their target setting process and the progress of LAC is monitored and recorded in the same way as pupils who are not LAC. Their attainment is compared to non LAC to ensure they are not underachieving. The Local Authority collects attainment data about LAC at the end of every term

LAC children also require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, every six months. Either before, or at the review, the child's views, at an age appropriate level, are sought and noted on the PEP.

Record Keeping

The staff know which children on the school role are LAC and have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. When a child becomes looked after or when a looked after child is admitted their LAC status and all the relevant contact details are inputted into the school information management system (SchoolPod) so that information is readily available as required – although almost all contact will agencies and families will be made by the DSL.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers.

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. School will follow the guidance provided by a child's social worker regarding letters home, attainment reports, consent for visits and who is invited to parental consultations and events in school. Sometimes it may be necessary to send communication from school to both biological parents and foster parents.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We recognise the importance of multi-agency working and the support that external agencies can contribute. All staff, but particularly the DSL regularly work with colleagues from other agencies to support vulnerable pupils including LAC.

KWS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children– LAC – are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Underachievement in further and higher education

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education
- Listening to children
- Providing stability and continuity
- Taking corporate responsibility
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising standards
- Intervening early
- Promoting early years experiences
- Celebrating success

The Designated Teacher (Susannah King)

- Be an advocate for LAC within school
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the school community
- Know who are all the LAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about LAC
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team where appropriate
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) with school
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk or exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key adviser for staff and trustees on issues relevant to LAC
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- Report to the Trustees on LAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc

- Prepare reports for Trustee meetings to include:
 - The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP
 - Their attendance compared to other pupils
 - Their attainment compared to other pupils
 - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school
- Ensure a key worker is allocated (as for all students at KWS).
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENDCo and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- Follow school procedures
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress and attainment
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC, including promoting extra-curricular involvement (community work)
- Positively promote the raising of a LAC's self-esteem
- Ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a LAC is experiencing difficulties
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate

Good practice suggests that the Trustees will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise LAC according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all Trustees are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- Liaise with the headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- Nominate a Trustee with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports for the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC 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 LAC
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC