



Policy and Procedures for the
Education of Looked-After and
previously Looked-after Children
and Young People at
Overley Hall School.

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Definitions: What is a care order?

When a child is made the subject of a care order, the local authority has legal responsibility for the child.

As parents you continue to have parental responsibility. However, the local authority can limit your parental responsibility if this is necessary in the interests of the child's welfare.

The local authority will decide where your child should live - this will normally be away from home.

(CAB Website)

Looked-after and previously looked-after children: the law

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 center or young offender institution
- unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

The exact definition of a 'looked after' child is different in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. For example, Scotland's definition includes children under a supervision requirement order. This means that many of the 'looked after' children in Scotland are still living at home, but with regular contact from social services.

A child will stop being 'looked after' when they are either adopted, returned home or turn 18. The local authority will continue to support children leaving care at 18 until they reach 21. (Taken from NSPCC website)

Children and Social Work Act 2017

2017 Chapter 16: Looked After Children (Part 1 Chapter 1)

Corporate parenting principles

- (1) A local authority in England must, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people mentioned in subsection (2), have regard to the need –
- a) To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
 - b) To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - c) To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;

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- d) To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- e) To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- f) For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education work;
- g) To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Other Types of order

Children Act 1989

No child can be taken into care without a court order or Section 20 Voluntary Care agreed by the parent(s), that grants responsibility to the local authority. Magistrates in the Family Proceedings Court usually issue court orders although more complicated cases may be held in the county or high court. A number of different orders may be made depending on the child's circumstances.

These include:

Care Orders - Made under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989, Care Orders are applied for when the local authority believes a threshold of 'Significant Harm' has been reached. Care Orders continue until the child is 18 unless they are discharged earlier. The Care Order allows the local authority to decide where the child will live and with whom. It gives the local authority parental responsibility for the child and the power to determine the extent to which the child's parents and others with parental responsibility may exercise their responsibility, where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Supervision Orders - These are made under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989, Supervision Orders may be used to if they require the supervised child to live at a specified place, meet certain people (e.g. their social worker) at certain times or to participate in certain activities at certain times. Supervision Orders last for one year.

Emergency Protection Orders - Made under Section 44 of the Children Act 1989, these orders are issued to ensure the short-term safety of a child. They are usually made when the child protection team feels it needs urgent access to the child. In exceptional circumstances, an EPO may be granted without notice to the parents. EPO's are granted for a maximum of eight days, with a possible extension of a further seven days, up to a maximum of 15 days.

Secure Accommodation Orders - Made under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989, these orders permit a local authority to place a child or young person who is looked after by the local authority in secure accommodation. They are usually used for children with a history of running away or who may be a risk to themselves or others. Their maximum period that can be authorized for a child to be kept in secure accommodation is three months on the first application and then for periods of up to six months thereafter. Children under the age of 13 cannot be held in secure accommodation without the consent of the Secretary of State. A child may also be

taken into care for police protection, remand or detention under section 21 of the Children Act 1989, or through involvement in the youth justice system.

Voluntary care agreements - Another way of entering care is for voluntary accommodation arrangements to be made under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. These are made with the consent of parents and often at their own request. Under these arrangements, the local authority does not acquire parental responsibility, but undertakes day-to-day parental responsibilities

Rationale

We recognise our duty of care towards all of the pupils placed at Overley Hall School and endeavour to provide a caring, nurturing and stimulating environment which offers unconditional acceptance. All young people at Overley Hall School are valued and their individuality is celebrated. We understand the importance of multi-agency partnerships and sharing of information in order to meet the needs of a child including 'Looked After' children. We believe that both Education and Residential departments must work closely together to support maximum progress. Progress can be further enhanced by school having good links with parents, social workers and associated professional. We understand that much of the information involving 'Looked After' pupils is sensitive and are mindful to the fact that access to information needs to be in the best interests of the child and on a need to know basis. We recognise the need for confidentiality and share information in accordance with the underlying ethos of the Children's Act 1989.

All children in our care, including 'Looked After' children are vulnerable children, and monitoring systems outlined in the school policies such as: Behaviour Management and Anti-bullying policies, and monitoring systems that enable us to review and evaluate individual pupil development and modify approaches at an early stage if difficulties arise. We work in close collaboration with parents and carers to ensure that the highest quality educational opportunities are offered, special needs of individual pupils are met and recognise and celebrate the educational achievements of all our pupils

Designated Teacher

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Bev Doran (Principal)

Administrator and co-ordination of PEPs for Looked After Children: Lorna Deakin (Learning Coordinator)

The Role of the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (LAC).

The designated teacher should be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning. (The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance Feb 2018).

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The designated teacher will:

- ensure all staff have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families
- understand the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on looked-after and previously looked-after children
- identify signs of potential mental health issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the Learning Coordinator and local authority support team where applicable
- understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group
- liaise with Virtual School to set and monitor the targets in relation to Pupil Premium and ensuring the monies received are spent on equipment or strategies that directly support the individual to progress and achieve
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:
 1. they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage
 2. there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning
 3. they support transitions to the next phase of education
 4. thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, further/higher education supported/unsupported work experience, training and employment
 5. there are no barriers to looked-after and previously looked-after children accessing the general experiences and activities the school offers
- work with cares, parents and social workers to promote good home-school links
- pay particular attention to building good communication with parents and carers in order to promote consistent working strategies and enable the young person to achieve and make progress across all areas of their life
- share effective practice with colleagues to improve behaviour and attendance, promote improved outcomes and school stability and identify and address barriers to learning
- ensure looked-after and previously looked-after children have access to one-to-one tuition where appropriate
- encourage high aspirations and working with the child for their future success and fulfilment
- leading on devising and delivering training about the needs of looked after children, including current legislation, guidance and information as it applies to the education of looked after children, for all staff
- Staff should have training on understanding and managing challenging behaviour
- Staff should have an understanding of the link between emotional wellbeing and being able to make educational progress

- work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to

In respect of looked-after children, the designated teacher should ensure that:

- the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice 0 to 25 years, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed; and
- children's PEPs work in harmony with their EHC plan to, coherently and comprehensively, set out how their needs are being met. Professionals should consider how the EHC plan adds to information about how education, health and care needs will be met without duplicating information already in a child's care plan or PEP. Equally, the child's care plan, including PEP, should feed into the care assessment section of the EHC plan
- ensure that, with the help of the VSH, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the Learning Coordinator and local authority support team where applicable
- appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported
- have procedures in place to monitor the PEP process and ensure it provides current information and the young person's views
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child

Supporting the individual:

- to enable the pupil to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan
- to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets
- have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- they are encouraged to take part in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system
- to help them believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education
- help them to discuss difficult issues with a familiar adult
- provide resources and tools to develop emotional resilience
- helping to ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan - PEP (initiated by the pupil's Social Worker)
- Adapt the student views to be accessible to them at an appropriate level
- Ensure they have the appropriate level of access and support from professional such as Speech and Language, Occupational Therapist, Clinical and or Educational Psychologist

Procedures.

When a 'Looked After' young person joins the school the young person's social worker contacts the 'Designated Teacher' and invites them to a PEP meeting. The 'Designated Teacher' receives a form to complete before attending the meeting detailing key information and any plans, records or reports that are relevant for completing the Action Plan of the PEP meeting and files information in a safe place. The paperwork is available on the relevant authority's websites, access to online ePEP's will require an individual login, and this is to be obtained from the Virtual School. ePEP's must be prepared in advance with all relevant information and attachments uploaded as required. The social worker also informs the 'Designated teacher' of any sensitive information that in their professional judgement the 'Designated Teacher' needs to know. An information sheet detailing key information is sent to the Head Teacher who ensures that it is entered into the Placement Plans.

Personal Education Plan Procedure

All looked-after children must have a care plan. This is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority responsible for the child. It should identify intended outcomes and objectives for the child and provide the framework to work with the child and carers in relation to their emotional and behavioural development, identity, relationships and self-care skills. The care plan must also include a health plan and PEP (DoE - The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018).

- The PEP is a record of the child's education and training. It is a vital document because it provides a 'collective memory' about the child's education
- Personal Education Plans (PEPS) are an essential tool to help children fulfil their potential. They enable key partners to communicate and to take action to support the child with learning and education.

The PEP may have been drawn up prior to the child becoming looked-after, however if a child becomes looked-after in an emergency, the PEP must be initiated within 10 working days of the start of the first placement. An initial version must be available for the 20 working-day review of the care plan.

The PEP should be initiated by the social worker as part of the care plan. The PEP is part of a looked-after child's official school record. If a child moves school, the PEP should be forwarded on as a matter of urgency.

The Designated Teacher will work closely with education and care staff to ensure all relevant information has been gathered to populate the PEP in advance of the meeting. The 'Designated Teacher' or if considered appropriate, another member of staff will attend the PEP meeting. They will help to write the Action Plan at the PEP meeting. After the meeting the 'Designated Teacher' will ensure that school support systems are in place where identified in the PEP and will ensure that referrals are made to any education agencies where that support has been identified in the PEP. If there are any problems e.g. within school attendance or behavioural issues arising before the next PEP is due (usually termly) the 'Designated teacher' will contact the child's social worker and an earlier PEP meeting may be arranged. It is expected that one of the PEP meetings will coincide with the Annual Review of the EHCP or Special Educational Needs (SEN) statement if waiting to be transferred to an EHCP held in

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school. The clerical officer at the Education area office will be alerted to this date and the school will handle arrangements for the meeting. Following the review the school secretary will send a copy of the SEN Annual Review document and the attached PEP Action Plan to everyone who would normally receive it, the 'Designated Teacher' and the PEP clerical officer at the area education office.

The social worker will be responsible for sending invites out to the PEP meetings.

At the PEP the social worker or Virtual School representative will lead the meeting, however all present will contribute which will include wherever possible, carer, parents/guardians, virtual teacher, social worker, designated teacher, Head teacher, Learning Coordinator, therapists, young person. The progress towards PEP targets, EHCP Outcomes/IEP, attendance certificate, educational timetable of the young person will be provided for inspection and to help identify support to achieve potential. All present will agree targets which will be SMART targets.

The social worker will update the PEP and distribute the updated version of the PEP to all present.

1.10g Pupil Premium will be discussed at this meeting and be agreed how it can be used to promote progression. (see Pupil premium policy)

Relevant Legislation:

- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018
- Court orders and pre-proceedings - For local authorities April 2014
- The children's act 1989
- Statutory guidance: Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children 2014, updated February 2018
- Statutory guidance: Working together to safeguard children March 2015, updated February 2017, July 2018
- Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards April 2015.