

Children Looked After Policy

Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations.

In line with the college's Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs policies, we aim to give all students equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of college life, as far as is appropriate, practicable and compatible with giving regard to health and safety and the efficient education of other students.

This policy takes account of the Government's aim for children to have the support they need under Every Child Matters:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being

The policy will follow the five principles of the Children's Plan:

- to support parents and families
- to allow children to reach their full potential
- to enable children to enjoy their childhood whilst preparing for adult life
- to provide services in response to children and family needs
- to use preventative measures to help students avoid the possibility of failure

This policy is founded in the College's commitment to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive and inclusive ethos for all members of the College community. It reflects the College's commitment to encourage and reflect diversity in all aspects of college life.

Foreword

Rooks Heath College is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. It is the personal responsibility of the Headteacher, as Accounting Officer, to prevent loss through fraud and irregularity. The Headteacher has delegated responsibility for formulation of this policy to the Associate Headteacher in consultation with staff. The policy is monitored by other members of the College's Leadership and Management Group. The policy is subject to tri-annual review by the College's Leadership and Management Group and is subject to approval by the Governors of the College.

Best Practice Guidance for Children Looked After

Rationale

At Rooks Heath we believe that all looked after children should have equal access to excellent education provision and achieve at a similar level to all Harrow children. As an educational community, we aim to be champions for Looked After Children and take a proactive approach to support their success. We recognise that we have a vital role to play in promoting young people's social and emotional development.

Aims

We will work to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all young people.
- Bring the educational attainments of our Looked After Children in line with those of their peers, ensuring that they have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identify the College's role to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- Nominate a Designated teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them, liaising with carers, natural parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.
- Ensure that Looked After Children, along with the rest of the College community improve outcomes as identified in Every child matters; these are:
 - Be healthy. For example, helping learners to adopt healthy lifestyles, build their self-esteem, eat and drink well and lead active lives
 - Stay safe. For example, keeping learners safe from bullying, harassment and other dangers
 - Enjoy and achieve. For example, enabling learners to make good progress in their work and personal development and to enjoy their education
 - Make a positive contribution. For example, ensuring learners understand their rights and responsibilities, are listened to, and participate in the life of the community

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- Achieve economic well-being. For example, helping pupils to gain the skills and knowledge needed for future employment.

(Taken from Ofsted Conducting the Inspection Guidance for inspectors of schools July 2005)

Statement of Intent

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring an improved educational life chance for Looked After Children.

Designated Person For Looked After Children

(See Appendix 1 and 2)

In Rooks Heath College the Designated Person for Looked After Children is Ms S Rockell, assisted by Ms L Dale and Ms L Geoghegan.

The DT for LAC maintains a register of all Looked After Children (this includes children both from in and out of the London Borough of Harrow).

This will include a record of:

- The contact person in the Education Looked After Children Team
- Status, i.e. care order or accommodated
- Type of placement, e.g. foster, respite, residential
- Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number
- Daily contact and telephone numbers where appropriate, e.g. name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
- Share Child Protection / disability information (if appropriate).
- Relevant health information.
- Baseline information and all test results.
- Named officers in the Local Authority with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.
- Attendance at Social Service reviews by the appropriate member of staff and/or preparation of a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Participation in joint training

Governors

- School staff and governors should be made aware of the DfES Statutory guidance duty on Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children;

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- A dedicated Governor or committee should be appointed to champion and monitor the work of the College in supporting its Looked After Children as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children.
- Should take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Looked After Children attending the College.
- Designated teachers and staff should be aware of, and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Headteacher.

School Community

- The College will celebrate the achievements of Looked After Children.
- All staff should have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- The young person will have the opportunity to engage with a trusted adult in College who is able to take time to listen to them.
- All staff within the College are made aware of the needs of LAC and actively promote their best interests.
- Staff in College will need to be sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known, and by whom, regarding their looked after status.
- Ensure effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established in accordance with the College's policy on LAC.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about LAC.
- Ensure staff actively seek training to help them fulfil their roles in relation to looked after young people.
- The designated teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the College and between College, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained.
- Support the engagement of LAC in out of College hours learning.
- Staff work in partnership with parents, carers and agencies.
- Support carers to value educational, achievement and improve attendance.
- Staff should encourage the individual to feel that they are an integral part of a large community, and ensure they have a safe haven and a sympathetic ear when required.
- Ensure that Looked After Children are listened to, and have access to support, counselling and other agencies if required.

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- Staff are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process, including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem.
- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'looked after' can have a major impact on children's lives. They need to be aware of unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers. This may have a detrimental effect on the children's behaviour.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this. Contact must be made with the Education Looked After Children Team as soon as concerns are raised.

SEND

- Any special educational needs are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made.
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need, the annual review should coincide with one of the six monthly care planning reviews, which can be obtained from the Social Worker.

Admissions/Transitions

- Ensure that on admission or transfer, all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- We will forward appropriate documents, to a receiving school at point of transition once the receiving College is made known.
- We will make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.
- We will prioritise LAC within our College's own admissions procedures

Attendance

- Where attendance is a problem, the 2 day contact procedure must be followed.

Exclusion

- If a Looked After Child is seen to be at risk of exclusion, then contact is made with the Looked After Children's Team immediately to minimise this happening.
- Be clear on who needs to be informed and holds parental responsibility.

Multi Agency Work

- The designated teacher will liaise closely with carers, natural parents and the students Social Worker on a variety of issues, including attainment, homework,

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and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared.

- There should be a well planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the young person's educational and social needs.
- There needs to be clear understanding about the role and responsibility of College staff in relation to the young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved.
- School staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the young person with other professionals but especially with the young person.
- The College should be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the natural parents, (if applicable).
- The designated teacher should ensure that requests from the LEA for statistical information held by the College are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations.
- Encourage each Looked After Child to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning.
- Support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making.

Personal Education Plans

- Ensure that there is a high quality personal education plan for each child within 20 days of starting College to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child's Social Services Care Plan and form part of any other College plan, e.g. Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.
- Following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that any Looked After Child has the opportunity to achieve his or her targets. The designated teacher or appropriate members of staff will attend Local Authority training regarding the roles and responsibilities involved in the education of Looked After Children.

APPENDIX 1

Role of Designated Person for looked after children

From the DfES Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care

- To have an overview of the School's looked after population.
- To develop the necessary understanding, policies and resources to promote good practice within the School.

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- To ensure that College is meeting the needs of individual young people who are looked after and that they have access to someone within the College they can talk to for support, if needed.
- To act as the general contact person for the Local Authority and Social Services to develop clear communication.

APPENDIX 2

Responsibilities of Designated Person for looked after children

1. Information on Looked After pupils in the College

- To keep a list of looked after student updated regularly and stored confidentially.
- To ensure that staff have relevant information on Looked After pupils to enable them to plan effectively and to meet the needs of the looked after student.
- To keep and to make available to College staff circulars, legislation and information pertaining to looked after children

2. Personal Education Plans

- To ensure that each looked after student has a current Personal Education Plan and that the plan is implemented in the College.
- To co-ordinate College based meetings in order to draw up or review the PEP prior to the Care Plan Review.

3. Co-ordinating Support

- To liaise with College staff on behalf of the looked after students and to contribute to any Care Plan or College based support plan.
- To ensure that the Pastoral Care system of the College can identify and meet the particular needs of Looked After students.
- To liaise between College staff and other agencies and be the first point of contact for Social Workers.
- To ensure speedy transfer of educational documentation and records between agencies and College.

4. Training

- To attend relevant training for Designated Persons responsible for looked after Children.
- To act as an advisor for College staff and the Governors on any issues relevant to looked after students.