



STEP Academy Trust

Children Looked After Policy

Date of Policy: Spring 2017

Review: Spring 2019

Introduction

The Governing Bodies of each STEP Academy Trust Academy are committed to providing quality education for all their pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Strategic Governing Bodies recognise that, nationally, there is a considerable gap in the educational achievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and are committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in “Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2010) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with our:

- Pupil Premium Policy;
- Safeguarding policies;
- Equality Policy;
- Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour and Anti Bullying policies;
- Curriculum and Teaching and Learning policies.

Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and potential and ability of all children is promoted;
- To bring the educational achievements of our Children Looked After (CLA) nearer to those of their peers;
- To identify each Academy’s role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Children Looked After. Asking the question ‘would this be good enough for my child?’;
- To ensure that carers and social workers of Children Looked After are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment;
- To ensure that pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision;
- To ensure that Children Looked After take as full a part as possible in all Academy activities.

Context and Rationale

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. 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 **'Children Looked After' (CLA)**. They may be looked after by our Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Children who are subject to special guardianship or adopted are not looked after but are now included in Pupil Premium Funding.

The Strategic Governing Bodies of STEP Academy Trust Academies are committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:

- A senior Leader as Designated Teacher for CLA;
- Personal Education Plans for all CLA;
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect CLA;
- Effective strategies that supports the education of this vulnerable group.

Responsibility of the Headteacher of each Academy

- Identify a designated teacher for CLA, whose role is set out below. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the designated teacher not be available to undertake these legal duties;
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admissions progress, attendance, exclusions and attainment of CLA and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations;
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related policies.

Responsibility of the Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body of each Academy will:

- Identify a Nominated Governor for CLA who links with the Designated Teacher;
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CLA;
- Ensure that the Academy has an overview of the needs of all its CLA regardless of the originating authority (no names);
- With the Headteacher, ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to CLA;
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of CLA;
- Review annually the effective implementation of the Academy policy for CLA.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for CLA;
- ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer. Note will be made of any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months; a flow chart showing the PEP completion is found at the end of this policy;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- ensure that each child (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- Maintain a register / database of all CLA in the Academy, to include:

- the name of the social worker, area office and contact details;
 - status i.e. care order or accommodated;
 - type of placement i.e. residential, foster, respite;
 - daily contact information e.g. name of carer / parent / key worker in residential home.
- ensure that the status of CLA is identified within the Academy's management information system to track academic and other progress and target support appropriately;
 - prepare reports for Governor's meetings to include:
 - the number of CLA on role and confirmation that they have a PEP;
 - their attendance compared to other pupils;
 - their attainment (SATs and teacher assessments compared to other pupils);
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions;
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the Academy.
 - ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as the needs of CLA;
 - 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;
 - ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive;
 - encourage CLA to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
 - ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
 - seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded;
 - work in partnership with Croydon Virtual School to provide progress data as requested.

Roles and Responsibilities of all Staff

- ensure that any child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child to achieve stability within the Academy setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA;
- positively promote the self-esteem of CLA.

Admission to Academy

Children Looked After are very high on our admission criteria and we expect them to have a planned admission to our Academy. We will seek to admit these children after meeting the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals, to identify needs, support mechanisms and allow the child to prepare to enter the Academy.

Allocation of Resources

The Local Governing Body of each Academy will ensure that the Academy allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and within our Pupil Premium Policy.

We will work with Croydon Virtual School and Virtual Schools for students from other Local Authorities, to ensure that CLA receive the full support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Confidentiality

Information on CLA will be shared with Academy staff on a “need to know basis.” The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which staff at the PEP meeting or initial meeting with the social worker and carer. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Training

The Headteacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

The Local Governing Body of each Academy will ensure staff receive appropriate training to fully undertake their roles with relation to CLA, allocating resources and time.

Further Information

Support for Children Looked After by Croydon is provided by the Bromley’s Virtual School. They may also be able to give advice about children looked after by other boroughs in the school.

virtual.school@bromley.gov.uk

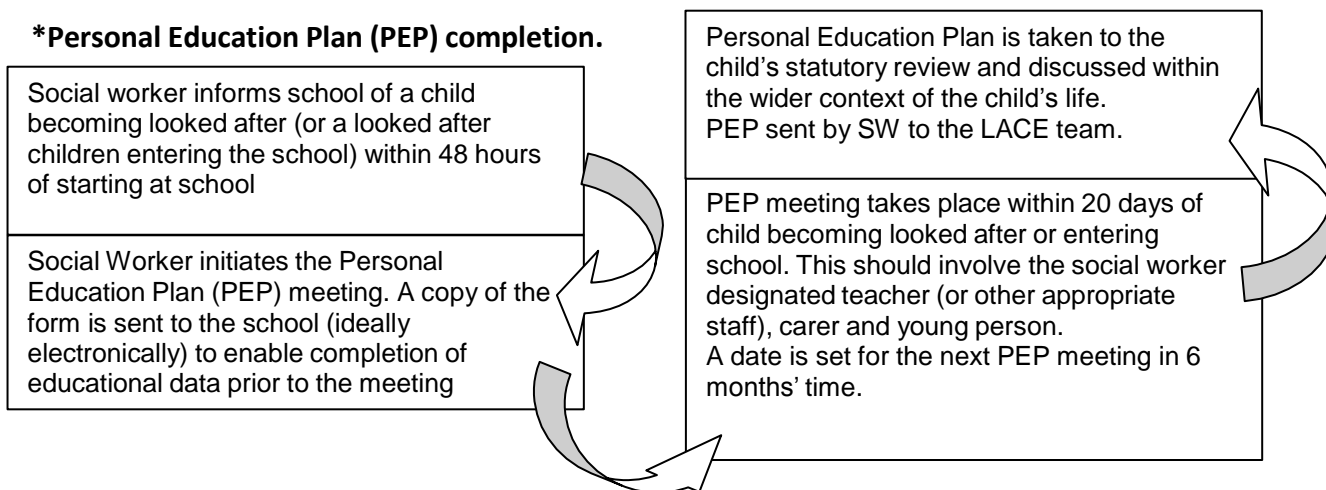
Tel: 020 8313 4177

Fax: 020 8313 4177

Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH

Further guidance can be found in Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2010)

*Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion.



***Note:** This process is for Children who are looked after by Croydon, it is very similar for children looked after by Lambeth - other authorities may have slightly different procedures on PEP completion as well as a different PEP format.