

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy

Looked after children policy

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Policy Version Control

Policy prepared by	OAT Model Policy
Responsible committee	
Date approved by committee	
Date ratified by LGB (if required)	
Description of changes from the model policy (if any)	1.

Ormiston Academies Trust

Looked after children policy

Policy Version Control

Policy type	Academy Model Policy
Policy prepared by (name and department)	Sarah Bloomer, Safeguarding and Compliance Coordinator
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I. Policy statement and principles

Policy aims and principles

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority, or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions¹. Children that fall within this definition are referred to as looked after children.

Nationally, looked after children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Approximately two thirds of looked after children have special educational needs and we recognise that we have a major part to play in ensuring that looked after children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

The role we play in our students lives are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children.

We aim to provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption and will tackle the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and we understand the pivotal role we play in this.

The academy’s approach to supporting the educational achievement of looked after children is based on the following objectives:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place
- Promote inclusion by providing a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes
- Ensure all looked after children have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the academy experience fully
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child’s care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of looked after children especially surrounding work on family
- Ensure that there is a designated teacher appointed and that they are provided with regular training
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within the academy and with outside agencies
- Endeavour to support the needs of all looked after children that are educated in this academy
- Support and encourage students to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential
- Promote and encourage improved attendance
- This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by OAT / the academy and is written in line with current legislation and guidance.

¹ Definition from Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989

1.2 Complaints

All complaints are dealt with under the **OAT Complaints Policy**.

Complaints should be made in writing and will follow the OAT complaint procedures and set timescales. The handling of complaints may be delegated to an appropriate person.

1.3 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and / or government guidance
- As a result of any other significant change or event
- In the event that the policy is determined not to be effective
- If there are urgent concerns these should be raised to the Senior Vice Principal, Andy Morgan, in the first instance for him to determine whether a review of the policy is required in advance of the review date.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Key personnel

Designated Teacher		Mr Andy Morgan
Contact Details	Email	andrew.morgan1@ormistonsandwell.org.uk
	Telephone	01215525501
Designated Safeguarding Lead		Mrs Gaynor Garner
Contact Details	Email	gaynor.garner@ormistonsandwell.org.uk
	Telephone	01215525501
SENDSCO		Mrs Sarah Dickens
Contact Details	Email	sarah.dickens@ormistonsandwell.org.uk
	Telephone	01215525501

In addition to the above, each looked after child will have a key worker who would ordinarily be either the Head of House or Assistant Head of House. Details of the key worker for any individual child can be obtained from Andy Morgan or Gaynor Garner as above

The designated teacher

- Under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, all maintained schools are required to have a designated teacher for looked after children.
- The primary duty of the designated teacher is to promote the educational achievement of looked after children at the school.
- It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure the designated teacher has received adequate training for the role.
- The designated teacher must submit an annual report to the governing body, which details the progress of looked after children.

The designated teacher will:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensure the child is involved in setting their targets.
- Advise staff on teaching strategies for looked after children.
- Ensure that looked after children are prioritised for 1 – 1 tuition.
- Take responsibility for developing and implementing PEPs.

Headteacher responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the headteacher to oversee this policy and monitor its implementation.
- The headteacher will make all members of staff aware that the support of looked after children is a key priority.
- The headteacher will allow the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- The headteacher will lead in actively challenging negative stereotypes of looked after children.

Staff responsibilities

- Staff will be aware of looked after children in their classes and provide them with support and encouragement.
- Staff will preserve confidentiality and show sensitivity and understanding.
- Staff will be vigilant for signs of bullying
- Staff will promote the self-esteem of looked after children.

3. Procedures

3.1 Admissions / transition arrangements

Looked after children and previously looked after children² are a priority for admission this is recognised in our admissions policy's oversubscription criteria.

On admission, a looked after child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our academy.

Records will be requested from the child's previous placement and as soon as practicable after the records are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan (PEP), and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires academy reports and who may give permission for trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed.

3.2 Personal Education Plan

- Every looked after child must have a personal education plan (PEP), which is used to support the child in fulfilling their educational potential.
- The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for the child to enable them to make their expected progress.
- The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- All the relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and other teachers, will work with the child in creating the PEP.
- The PEP will include access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going, catch-up support will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- If a child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion, suitable education will be provided by the LA.
- If a child is moving to a new school, transitional support will be provided and will be factored into their PEP.
- Support will be provided to help the child meet their aspirations, including:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national curriculum key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
 - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about further education, training and employment.
- The PEP will include extended services such as after school clubs, study support and leisure interests.
- Support will be provided for improving attendance and behaviour.

² Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).

3.3 Confidentiality

Many looked after children do not want academy staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel “different”. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status however we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

3.4 Communicating with agencies

- The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the looked after children’s social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- The school will co-ordinate their review meetings, for example, hold their annual review of looked after children with their statutory care review.
- The school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues.

3.5 Attendance

Attendance at the academy is important to all students overall development. We will monitor students’ attendance and identify those with attendance issues and work closely with those students, their carer(s) and any appropriate bodies to improve that the attendance levels of looked after children.

3.6 Exclusions

We understand that looked after children are disproportionately represented in regards to national exclusions statistics. We will endeavour to support and work with our students to ensure that any issues are identified and early intervention strategies are put in place as a prevention method.