

Looked After Children/ Young People Policy

1. Introduction

The JCB Academy is committed to providing quality education for all its students based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes.

The academy recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children and young people who are 'looked-after', when compared with their peers. Many looked after young people suffer from a disrupted school experience and have gaps in their learning which become barriers to their progress.

The academy is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in 'Improving the attainment of looked after young people in secondary schools - Guidance for Schools' (2009) and Section 52 of the Children Act (2004).

2. Definitions

Children who are 'looked after' - as defined in The Children Act (1989) - may be 'accommodated', 'in care' or 'remanded/detained' as follows:

2.1 Accommodated

This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

2.2 In care

A child is in care only if a court has granted a care order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

2.3 Remanded/detained

A child can be remanded or detained following:

- An emergency protection order.
- Removal by police using their powers of protection.
- Remanded by a court following criminal charges.

- A court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

3. Issues

Looked after children/young people may have some or all the following issues:

- Low self-esteem.
- Trust issues towards adults, particularly those in positions of authority.
- Poor educational standards due to time out of school.
- Delayed social/emotional/cognitive development.
- Be bullied or bully others.
- Be prone to mental health issues.
- Be isolated with few friends.
- Have behaviour issues.
- Have poor attachments to others.

These issues can make them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

The above list is not exhaustive and the academy recognises that each looked after student is an individual with their own likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, background and family circumstances. The academy will strive to ensure that looked after students are valued as individuals and that the support they are offered is in line with their own specific needs.

The academy is committed to ensuring that these children/young people are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:

- A Designated Teacher for looked after children.
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all looked after children.
- Clear understanding amongst all staff of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Designated Teacher

Working collaboratively with the Student Support Team Leader, the Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for students who are looked after children/young people.
- Ensure a smooth transition and induction for a student who is a looked after child and his/her carer, noting any specific requirements, including care status.

- Ensure that a PEP is completed as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or joining the academy). This should be prepared with the student and carer in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/external agencies. The PEP should also be linked to the outcomes and action points detailed in care plans.
- Ensure that PEPs and other records are kept up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings.
- Ensure that, if they wish, each student who is a looked after child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the student's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher).
- Co-ordinate support in the academy for students who are looked after children, liaising with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training, acting as an advisor to staff and governors.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual students 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 students who are looked after children and their carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when students transfer.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the student is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Ensure that returns on looked after children are completed as requested by local authorities.
- Report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of each student who is a looked after child. (These reports should not include any names of individual students for child protection and confidentiality reasons.)

4.2 All staff

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to:

- Ensure that any student who is a looked after child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.

- Respond positively to any requests from students who are looked after children 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.
- Ensure, as with all students, that no student who is a looked after child is stigmatised in any way.
- Provide a supportive environment to enable a student who is a looked after child/young person to achieve stability within the academy setting.
- As with all students, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after children/young person.
- Positively promote the self esteem of students who are looked after children/young people.

4.3 Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for looked after children/young people.
- Be aware of whether the Academy has looked after children/young people on their roll and how many (no names).
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for looked after children/young people.
- Liaise with the Principal to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to looked after children/young people.
- Support the Principal, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of looked after children/young people are met.

5. Confidentiality

Information on looked after children/young people will be shared with relevant academy staff on a need to know basis only.

The Designated Teacher and Student Support Team Leader will discuss what information is shared with which academy staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, student and other parties, complete confidentiality will be maintained.

6. Training

The Designated Teacher, Student Support Team Leader and CPD Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practices outlined in this policy.

Date of approval by Governing Body: 15 June 2010
Reviewed and reapproved: 5 July 2016
Date of next biennial review: July 2018