

## **BRIGHT FUTURES EDUCATIONAL TRUST**

### **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY**

#### **1. Rationale**

- 1.1** The Trust is dedicated to providing a positive, varied and enriched educational experience for all Looked After Children (LAC) and strives to ensure a high level of progress and achievement from our LAC cohort.
- 1.2** LAC are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared with their peers. For example, they may experience:
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
  - A high level of disruption in home life.
  - Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities and experiences.
- 1.3** The above may result in:
- Poor examination success rates in comparison with the general population.
  - Poor attendance rates in comparison with the general population.
  - Underachievement in further and higher education, employment or training.

#### **2. Aims**

- 2.1** To promote and support the educational achievement and welfare of LAC pupils/students.
- 2.2** To ensure all staff are informed of the specific needs of LAC pupils/students.
- 2.3** To ensure equality of opportunity for LAC pupils/students.
- 2.4** To achieve continuity and stability for LAC pupils/students.
- 2.5** To involve LAC pupils/students in their education.
- 2.6** To support LAC into appropriate further education, employment or training.

### **3. Definition of Looked After Children**

- 3.1** Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by the local authority if he, or she, is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than twenty-four hours by the Local Authority. They fall into four main groups:
  - 3.1.1** Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents.
  - 3.1.2** Children who are the subjects of a care order, or interim care order.
  - 3.1.3** Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection.
  - 3.1.4** 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.
- 3.2** 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.
- 3.3** Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘accommodated’ by the Local Authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. They may live in foster care, in a Children’s Home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be ‘Looked After Children’.

### **4. Entitlement of Looked After Children**

- 4.1** All LAC pupils/students will be entitled to:
  - 4.1.1** A dedicated LAC mentor, in addition to a Designated Teacher and pastoral support.
  - 4.1.2** Priority entry to extra-curricular clubs and activities.
  - 4.1.3** Priority entry to any Aim Higher activities or equivalents, if it is felt to be of benefit.
  - 4.1.4** Priority places on educational school trips and visits (N.B. not holidays.)

## **5. Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children**

- 5.1** In all academies, a Designated Teacher for LAC will be named. The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are to:
- 5.1.1** Cultivate and maintain a culture of high aspiration for LAC.
  - 5.1.2** Be an advocate for LAC within the Academy.
  - 5.1.3** Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.
  - 5.1.4** Know who all the LAC in the Academy are, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems, as required.
  - 5.1.5** Attend relevant training about meeting the needs of LAC.
  - 5.1.6** Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC.
  - 5.1.7** Ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering the Academy.
  - 5.1.8** Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the pupil/student contributes to the plan.
  - 5.1.9** Track and monitor LAC achievement, progress and attendance.
  - 5.1.10** Keep PEPs and other records up-to-date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals.
  - 5.1.11** Convene a multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties, or is at risk of exclusion.
  - 5.1.12** Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils/students, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil/student.
  - 5.1.13** Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for LAC.
  - 5.1.14** Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement.

- 5.1.15** Contribute information to LAC reviews, when required.
- 5.1.16** Report to the Governing body on LAC in the school and inform relevant policy and practice development.
- 5.1.17** To offer all staff advice and strategies to effectively meet the needs of all LAC and ensure high levels of achievement and attendance.
- 5.1.18** Ensure LAC are a priority for one-to-one support, if required.
- 5.1.19** Be aware that 60% of LAC say they are bullied, so work to prevent the bullying in line with the Academy Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **6. Responsibilities of All Staff**

- 6.1** As with all pupils/students, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of LAC.
- 6.2** Be familiar with guidance on the education of LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- 6.3** Liaise with the Designated Teacher when a LAC is experiencing difficulty.
- 6.4** Heads of Subject/Heads of Department should:
  - Track LAC as key cohort.
  - Prioritise LAC for intervention and support.
  - Keep the Designated Teacher informed on LAC progress.
- 6.5** Heads of House/Senior Tutors and dedicated pastoral support staff should:
  - Provide additional support for LAC, where needed.
  - Take into consideration difficulties of the care system when issuing fixed term exclusions.
  - Keep the Designated Teacher informed of any pastoral concerns affecting the welfare, achievement and attendance of the LAC.

## **7. Responsibilities of the Governing Bodies**

- 7.1** Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the latest Admissions Code of Conduct.
- 7.2** Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC.
- 7.3** Ensure there is a named, Designated Teacher for LAC.

- 7.4 Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who liaises with the Designated Teacher.
- 7.5 Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- 7.6 Ensure that the Academy's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
  - National Curriculum and public examinations.
  - Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities.
  - Work experience and careers guidance.
- 7.7 Ensure the Designated Teacher undertakes relevant training.
- 7.8 Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually, and at least every three years.

## **8. Admission Arrangements**

- 8.1 Each academy will ensure LAC are prioritised in the school's over-subscription criteria.
- 8.2 On admission, records will be requested from the LAC's previous school.
- 8.3 A meeting will be held with carers/parents/social workers, as appropriate, to complete the baseline information to inform the LAC's PEP.
- 8.4 A home/school agreement will be drawn up with the primary carer.
- 8.5 An appropriate school induction will take place.

## **9. Training**

- 9.1 The Headteacher/Principal, Designated Teacher and Professional Development Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the latest regulations and practices outlined in good practice and national guidelines documentation.