

MANCHESTER HEALTH ACADEMY

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) POLICY

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Approval History

Approved By:	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Comments
	2011	V1	Base Document
Board of Governors	17/07/14	V2	
Standards Committee	11/05/17	V3	Approved

Revision History

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Rev	Summary of Changes	Changes Marked	Owner/Editor
11.07.14			Policy reviewed	N	D Owen
May 2017		V3	Policy reviewed	Y	LM

1. Purpose

Manchester Health Academy aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of students in public care. This policy therefore details the Academy's strategy to promote the educational, personal development and welfare of all children in care so that they achieve in line with their peers and national expectations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by the Academy.

3. Responsibility

3.1 Rationale for roles and responsibilities

3.1.1 Looked After Children – LAC - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Underachievement in further and higher education
- Attachment and feeling a lack of belonging.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

3.1.2 The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. To date the outcomes achieved by LAC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success
- providing career guidance and support.

3.2 The Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure they are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC

- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- liaise with the Principal, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher or Governor
- ensure that the Academy's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
 - admission to Academy
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of academy learning and extra-curricular activities
 - work experience and careers guidance
- systematically review the effective implementation of the Academy policy for LAC
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC

Governor with responsibility for LAC: Tom MacDonald

3.3 The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for LAC within the Academy
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the Academy community
- know who are all the LAC in the Academy, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from Academy record-keeping systems as required. This is done through a vulnerable pupil list.
- attend relevant training about LAC
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate
- ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering the Academy, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- ensure that all LAC have an appropriate EPEPs that is completed within 20 days of joining the Academy or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- keep EPEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC
- ensure that care and academy liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other Academy events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extracurricular activities for LAC
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement
- contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- liaise with the virtual school regarding all LAC pupils
- report to the Governing body on LAC in the Academy and inform of relevant policy and practice development

- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc, encouraging carers and parents to attend if suitable
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
- the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
- provide information on the way in which allocated funding for the child is spent
- their attendance compared to other students.
- their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other students
- the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusion
- the destinations of students who leave the academy and encourage continuing participation in education or training
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC
- arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to Academy
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general Academy population

Designated Teacher for LAC:

Leanne Maguire/ Julie Hawkins DSP

3.4 Academy staff will:

- follow Academy procedures
- be aware of the LAC students we have
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC
- positively promote the raising of a LAC's self esteem
- ensure any LAC students are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- be familiar with the academy's policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC is experiencing difficulties
- give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the Academy's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required

3.5 The Local Authority will:

- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC
- ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other Manchester City pupil
- ensure that LAC receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Manchester from another authority

- make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
 - ensure that every school or academy has a Designated Teacher for LAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
 - provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
 - ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
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- work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer. Attend LAC reviews and PEP meeting prior to starting at the academy
 - identify a designated officer who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC
 - be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs

4 Definition – Who are Looked After Children?

4.1 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 by the authority. 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).

4.2 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 academy, 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. Privately Fostered children are children under the age of 16 cared for, for a period of longer than 6 weeks, by someone who is not their close relative. All these groups are said to be '**Looked After Children**' - LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

5 Our approach

5.1 The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

- 5.2 This policy therefore recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the Academy makes appropriate provision for all LAC students.

6 Aims of the Academy

The Academy aims to:

- ensure that Academy policies and procedures are followed for LAC
- ensure LAC students have a positive experience within education
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that LAC students take as full a part as possible in all Academy activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC students are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision
- ensure that Pupil Premium funding is appropriately spent on enriching their learning
- ensure that all EPEPs are completed within time scale and to a high standard

7 Admissions

The Governing Body endorses council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Academy's, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC students. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter the academy mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

8. Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the academy allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

9. Monitoring the progress of LAC

- 9.1 The social worker for the LAC student should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of joining the academy, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the academy assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.
- 9.2 The Academy will monitor and track the attendance, achievement and attainment of all students at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the EPEP. Social workers will complete their section and education will complete theirs. Once completed this will be signed off by Virtual School within Manchester City Council.

10. Record keeping

- The Designated Teacher will know who are all the LAC in Academy and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other authorities. It is important that the Academy flags LAC status appropriately in the Academy's information systems so that information is readily available as required. The Designated Teacher for LAC attends as appropriate meetings around the transition of students who will be joining the Academy.
- All staff will be informed through the Academy's record keeping.
- All EPEPs will be completed to a high standard.

11. Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings/PEP meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working. If appropriate the child's parents may attend parental information events in order to be informed about the progress of their child

12. Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- LAC teams / Virtual School
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS/ Connexions
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service

13. LAC policy review and evaluation

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the Academy Development Plan.

14. Related Documents

Please note that separate policies are available on:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

15. Useful links to guides and resources

Training for Designated Teachers:

<http://www.akamas.co.uk/>

Initiatives/interventions to promote learning:

<http://www.letterboxclub.org.uk/>

<http://www.vrh.org.uk/>

Useful sites for Secondary academies:

<http://www.aimhighergreatermanchester.co.uk/>

<http://www.connexions-manchester.com/>

Other useful sites:

<http://www.anationalvoice.org/>

16. Contacts

Local Authority address and contact number for the LAC Education Team:

1st Floor
Universal Square
Devonshire Street North
Manchester M6 12 JJH
TEL: 0161 324 4160 or 0161 219 6913

The academy has a link advisor and the DT will work alongside them to support the needs of each LAC student that attends the academy.

Appendix 1:

EPEP GUIDANCE

(A) Initiating EPEPs on Child's entry to care

- The Designated Teacher / support will have an email log in and password to access and complete the EPEP.
- Complete the education sections of the EPEP in consultation with the social worker/carer/parents/child as appropriate. Set educational targets which may also include attendance, carers.
- Discuss plan with child/young person. Encourage and record their comments throughout the EPEP.
- Discuss the use of Pupil Premium money and how it will impact on the education
- Inform the Academy nurse that the young person has entered public care or that a young person in care has joined the Academy.
- **Keep original completed EPEP in child's academy file and use as a working document. All online logs will also be kept.**

(B) For Statutory Care Plan Review meetings

- It is a statutory requirement that PEPs are reviewed every six months.
- Before the Statutory Care Plan review, update the PEP by:
 - Recording any additions to the **Cumulative Record**
 - Reviewing targets and actions from last EPEP meeting
 - Completing a new **PEP-Plan/Review**. Be sure to record any changes here as well as setting new targets and record any comments from child/young person.
- Take copy of the EPEP (and any attached information) to meeting or, if not attending, send it to the Reviewing Team.
- Put a copy of the **EPEP- Plan/Review** form (and any updated information) with the original EPEP in the child/young person's Academy file.

Also consider:

- If the child/young person has Special Educational Needs, you may wish to hold the PEP and IEP reviews together to minimise paperwork and time.
- If child/young person moves educational setting, forward the completed EPEP, including the review documents, along with the child's academy file in the normal way to the receiving academy.

For fuller explanations please refer to the DfES “Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care”.