



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

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1. DEFINITION

1.1 This policy refers to young people who are Looked After as defined by the Children Act 1989. That is those learners who are under the age of 18 and are:

- The subject of an interim or full-time care or emergency protection order;
- Unaccompanied minors who are asylum seekers;
- Accommodated by a local authority with the agreement of their parent(s) or legal guardian;
- Compulsorily accommodated as a result of criminal proceeding.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Nationally, 'Looked After Children' significantly underachieve compared with their peers. A report by Oxford University demonstrated this is often related to how long a child has been in care as young people who have been in longer-term care do better than those 'in need' but not in care, and better than those who have only been in short term care – so it appears that care may protect them educationally. that Colleges have a major part to play in ensuring that 'Looked After Children' aged 16 to 18 are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being, in line with Every Child Matters.

Helping 'Looked After Children' succeed and providing a better future for them is a priority for The Henley College. This policy complements the College's Child Protection Policy and identifies further responsibilities that the College believes it should undertake in relation to 'Looked After Children'.

Both policies take account of the following legislation and research:

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 which brings all agencies into line with the duties placed on schools and Colleges by section 175 of the Education Act 2002; Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004; The Children and Young Person's Act 2008; *Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care* (Looked After Children) and the University of Oxford and REES Centre report on *The Educational Progress of Looked after Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data*.

The duties to safeguard and promote welfare are part of the comprehensive strategy of change for children which began with the publication of Every Child Matters in September 2003.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 The College's approach to supporting the achievements of 'Looked After Children' will focus on:

- Targeted support through their time at the College by subject specialists and personal tutors. These targets will be reviewed not only at PEPs and the bi-annual reports, but at least half-terminly by each student's Senior tutor.
- Ensuring the equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all
- The promotion of regular and punctual attendance
- High quality learning opportunities that allow students to attain beyond their expected goals whilst supporting realistic goals in relation to their qualifications on entry.

- Supporting all students in achieving across the five outcome areas of Every Child Matters, whatever their background or circumstances.
- The promotion of stability and continuity
- Comprehensive and impartial advice and guidance
- Listening to students
- Immediately identifying and supporting LAC who are vulnerable and/or come to us “at risk” of failure in a learning, emotional, mental or physical context.

3.2 Therefore with specific reference to this cohort of students we will strive to achieve the following aims:-

- To ensure all College policies and procedures are followed sensitively for this cohort of students.
- To ensure that for these students there is a greater focus on progress over time and recognition that some young people take longer to make significant progress, especially is the student changed placements after the age of 11 (is associated with one-third of a grade less in formal exams) or whom changed school during years 10 or 11 as young people in care who changed school in Years 10 or 11 scored on average over five grades less than those who did not and also significantly impacts their ability to believe that they can succeed in Further Education.
- To ensure that these students have access to a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum. To provide personalised learning and curriculum appropriate to needs and ability.
- To support and monitor social progress.
- To ensure that students in this category take as full a part as possible in all College activities and strive to reduce and eliminate any barriers that may stop them from taking part.
- To ensure that carers, social workers and parents/guardians (as appropriate) of these students are involved and kept fully informed of the student's progress and attainment.
- To ensure that wherever possible these students are involved in decisions affecting their learning, the plans for progress and future provision.
- To ensure that success is appropriately recognised and reinforced.
- To ensure that any emerging concerns are followed up in a timely way with skill and sensitivity (e.g. changes in patterns of behaviour and attendance) The College recognises the importance of this as LAC are statistically much more likely to have a poor attendance record and are up to 5 times more likely to be excluded than their non-looked after peers. In addition, for every 5% of possible College sessions missed due to unauthorised absences, young people in care scored over two grades less at GCSE and A-Level. Should one of these students be identified as at risk of exclusion, contact will be made with the LA / Social, to enable early intervention / preventative strategies to be instigated.
- To liaise and cooperate with appropriate partners, in particular Social Care to ensure that all plans complement and support the promotion of the educational achievement and well-being of these students.

3.3 In order to provide LAC with an equal opportunity, there is a need to identify them at the very earliest opportunity in order to provide them with a tailored experience from pre-entry guidance through to progression. Therefore, the College aims to provide the following support to all LAC:

- Ensure out-reach activities are accessible, e.g. taster days, open days and that costs are not a barrier to participation.

- Effectively publicise College support for potential LAC and those colleagues in local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, etc. who are supporting them in their educational progression.
- The Lead Safeguarding Officer will have a lead responsibility to act as a key point of contact and advisor for LAC, to provide support prior to and on entry, as well as throughout the learning programme.
- Ensure early identification of applicants and establish contact with them as appropriate.
- Ensure information on the full range of support offered to LAC is readily available and easily accessible (financial, welfare and academic).
- Offer identified personal support before the course starts i.e. transition and identify arrangements for any continuing support post enrolment if required.
- Where appropriate offer flexible application arrangements e.g. compact, interview guarantees, etc.
- Ensure that the individual's circumstances are reflected in the support offered and accommodated within processes related to application and other funding provision.
- Provide impartial progression guidance relating to further study or progression routes into employment.

3.4 Young people report that teachers provide the most significant educational support for them but teachers suggest that they need more training to do this effectively. The Henley College is committed to educating staff, who have student contact, on the difficulties faced by LAC and the support networks available to them.

4. DESIGNATED STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER

4.1 The Head of Student Services has responsibility for Child Protection and this includes responsibility for Children Who Are Looked After and is supported in this role by the Student Support Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

4.2 The designated members of staff will liaise with external agencies and those members of staff working with or supporting LAC are the Senior Tutors, Lisa Crew, Jermaine Smith and Tracy Page. Members of staff linked with the LAC will have additional responsibility in weekly monitoring, co-ordinating interventions and developing an offer of support.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Lead or designated senior member of staff

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/designated member of staff will:

- Be responsible for the writing and updating of the College's LAC policy.
- Inform the College Leadership Team of the progress of LAC as and when required.
- Liaise with Local Authorities (LAs) to ensure that the College is aware of all students who have LAC status.
- Ensure that staff with LAC responsibility receive appropriate awareness training.

5.2 Responsibilities of the Professional Tutor

The Professional Teachers will:

- Ensure that a one to one is completed regularly with each student to check on general progress, attendance and wellbeing.
- That each one-to-one meeting is registered on the portal and any identified concerns are relayed to the Senior Tutor for the Faculty.
- Pursue any absences and address any low-level concerns raised by subject specialists and refer to Senior Tutors if necessary.
- In the light of the high percentage of Children Who Are Looked After who say they have experienced being bullied, pay particular attention to the state of students' relationships with peers

5.3 Responsibilities of the Senior Tutor

The Senior Tutor will:

- Ensure that a one to one is completed for each student in conjunction with the student, the student's foster care and social worker, as and when required
- Contribute towards the Personal Educational Plan process and chair the PEP meetings.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievements of such learners
- Review students' progress regularly and liaise with the team surrounding the student to target support appropriately
- Weekly tracking and monitoring of the student
- Monitor students' attendance carefully and target support appropriately

In the light of the high percentage of Children Who Are Looked After who say they have experienced being bullied, pay particular attention to the state of students' relationships with peers

5.4 Responsibilities of the Student Services Team

The Student Services Team will:

- Ensure that the transition to College is as smooth as possible for these students through an Induction programme which takes account of their particular needs, as and when required.
- Ensure that those students who are LAC receive an application for the Guarantee Bursary that is available to them.
- Ensure that those students who are LAC receive information regarding any further financial support that they are entitled to including free school meals and help with transport.
- Ensure that those students who are LAC receive learning support if they are entitled to it at the earliest opportunity.

6. RECORD KEEPING / INFORMATION SHARING / CONFIDENTIALITY

The Senior Tutors will co-ordinate record keeping for all LAC in College.

- Records which include individual learning plans, up to date progress and attainment records are accessible digitally via the Portal.
- PEP planning records are kept digitally by the LEA with access given only to the parties involved in the PEP.
- We will ensure there is ready access to information and up to date contact details for carers, parents (where appropriate), social worker and the named Social Care contact.
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving College/university promptly if there is a transfer to another educational establishment.
- Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of the College staff. We are guided by best practice and on the 'need to know'. Wherever possible students' wishes are taken into account in sharing information.

7. DATA PROTECTION

All data relating to LAC will be held in accordance with the College's Data Protection and GDPR Policy. This policy conforms to the Data Protection Act 2018 (which implemented the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) and its eight principles. In relation to the second principle, data on LAC will be held for the specific purpose of enabling the College to put in place any support, guidance and advice which these students may need above and beyond that offered to other students.

8. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy

Data Protection and GDPR Policy

9. APPROVAL AND MONITORING

The College Leadership Team has key responsibility for approving and establishing the policy

10. REVIEW

Copies of this policy are on the College Intranet and also accessible via the Safeguarding section of the College's External website.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Student Services.