



**Hanham  
Woods  
Academy**

**Hanham Woods Academy  
Looked After Children Policy**

November 2023

For information and guidance and incorporating the Academy's vision and core values. It forms part of the portfolio of policies designed to keep students safe, happy and cared for.

Status: Approved

**HWA Looked After Children Policy**

<b>Policy Title</b>	Looked After Children Policy
<b>Function</b>	For information and guidance and incorporating the Academy's vision and core values. It forms part of the portfolio of policies designed to keep students safe, happy and cared for.
<b>Status</b>	Approved
<b>Audience</b>	Students, Parent/carers, Councillors, Principal, Teachers, Support Staff, Local Authority
<b>Ownership / Implementation</b>	The Principal and the Academy Council have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
<b>Implementation Date</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
<b>Review period</b>	Annually
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	November 2023



## 1. Background

Nationally, Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked after Children are supported to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Helping Looked After Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for the Academy. This policy takes account of:

## 2. Legislative Compliance

This Policy has been written as guidance for staff, parents or carers and young people with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- The Children and Young Persons Act (2008): Section 20 Education
- Roles and Responsibilities for the Designated Teacher for Children in Care (DCSF 2009)
- Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools (DCSF 2009)
- Promoting the educational achievement of looked after children: statutory guidance for local authorities (DCSF 2010)

## 3. Linked Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Additional Needs Policy, and the SEN Information Report.

## 4. Definitions

The terms Looked After Child (LAC) and Child in Care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term LAC. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parent/carers;
- children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parent/carers. If living with their parent/carers, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

## 5. Policy Aims and Objectives

Hanham Woods Academy aim to ensure that our Looked After Children achieve success in a caring and stimulating learning environment. We recognise that Looked After Children often have additional barriers to learning and therefore require additional support. Hanham Woods Academy's approach to overcoming these barriers is based on our commitment to:

- Prioritise education;
- Promote attendance;
- Provide targeted spending of Student Premium Plus funding;
- Support the needs of our Looked After Children by ensure that our teachers and support staff are aware of the specific needs of our Looked After Children;
- Develop trust, positive learning attitudes and behaviours;
- Listen to the views of our Looked After Children and take these views into account wherever appropriate • Provide continuity and stability for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, neglect, abuse and disruption;
- Maintain high expectations whilst reducing exclusions.

Consequently, we support our Looked After Children by:

- Ensuring an effective induction when joining the Academy or when coming into care whilst already on the Academy roll;
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge;
- Ensuring that each LAC has a high quality Personal Education Plan and that actions are followed up and closely monitored;
- Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships ;
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies;
- Encouraging and supporting LACs to take responsibility for their learning;
- Engaging LAC in learning outside the classroom and at after-school activities;
- Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance;
- Giving integrated but low profile support in the Academy for each LAC so that they are not made to feel different from other young people;
- Planning for future transitions e.g. to further or higher education;
- Ensuring that specific LAC Student Premium Plus Funding is targeted to meet their specific needs and closely match targets and actions from the Personal Education Plans primarily informed from their students voice.

## **6. Roles & Responsibilities**

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children at Hanham Woods Academy is:

Name: Rebecca Gardner Contact: rebecca.gardner@clf.uk

The named Councillor for Looked After Children at Hanham Woods Academy is:

Name: Lisa West

Contact:

**Academy Council:**

The role of the Academy Council is to:

- Identify a nominated Academy Councillor for Looked After Children;
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children;
- Allocate resources to support the Designated Teacher to carry out this role to effectively meet the needs of the Looked After Children;
- Ensure the Academy's other policies and procedures support their needs;
- Receive an annual report written by the Designated Teacher outlining the of the needs and progress of Looked After Children. This report should include:
  - The number of looked-after students on the Academy's roll (if any)
  - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other students
  - GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discreet group, compared to other students
  - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
  - The destinations of students who leave the Academy.

*The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the students concerned.*

**Principal:**

The role of the Principal is:

- To ensure that, in partnership with the Academy Council, the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of Looked After Children.
- To make sure that the Designated Teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the Academy who is likely to be involved in supporting Looked After Children to achieve.
- In partnership with the Academy Council, to monitor the effectiveness of the role of the Designated teacher.
- To oversee the development of the policy on Looked After Children.
- To evaluate the standards and achievement of LAC and report these termly to the Academy Council and discuss them at Core/HOPE meetings.
- To ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support Looked After Children.

**Designated Teacher:**

The Designated Teacher has lead responsibility for helping Academy staff understand the barriers and effective strategies which affect how LAC learn and achieve. The role of the Designated Teacher is to:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the student's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children that is necessary within the Academy.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual students, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Academy Council, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the student is experiencing difficulties in the Academy or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and - if the student changes school - to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of Academy life.
- Keep local authority tracking systems up to date and ensure accurate return of all progress data.
- Coordinate with and oversee house teams to ensure Looked After Children are being supported within the Academy by the people that work most closely with them. This includes their involvement in the running of PEPs and day-to-day communication and procedures e.g. attendance monitoring.

**All Staff:**

Improving the outcomes for LAC and ensuring they are included in the life of the Academy is the responsibility of all staff. All staff at Hanham Woods Academy will:

- Ensure that all Looked After Children are made to feel welcome and included;
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all students;
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a Looked After Child's behaviour and why they may need more support than other young people;
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information;
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success at HWA;
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children;

- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children and respond positively to a request to be the named member of staff whom the Looked After Child can talk to when they feel it is necessary.

## **7. Supporting those in Care**

### Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All Looked After Children must have a Care Plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The Care Plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the LAC's official school record. The Academy and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping Looked After Children to achieve and enjoy. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the LAC, carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care.

The PEP should include challenging, curriculum-based targets and support the LAC's educational progress. If the LAC has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan, this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

### Additional funding – Student Premium Plus (PP+)

Young people in long term care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined as a result of government policy.

The Academy is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible Looked After Children on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan and closely meets actions agreed and identified from student voice, teachers and carers views.

The Designated Teacher will report to the Council in the Annual Report on LAC on how this is used and the impact that it has.

### Admission/Induction Arrangements

Looked After Children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the Academy or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the Academy's expectations and processes and the LAC will meet with the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. The Designated Teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the LAC is made to feel supported in our Academy. Consideration will be given to giving the LAC a peer mentor if this will support their progress.

On admission, records will be requested from the LAC's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the LAC, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and



support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When young people already on the Academy roll enter care, the Academy will ensure that the LAC meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and that they are fully informed of the Academy procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and an initial PEP meeting must be held within 28 days.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires Academy reports and who may give permission for Academy trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/Academy book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

### Educational Visits and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that Looked After Children enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent.

### Leaving Arrangements

When a LAC leaves the Academy we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school or FE/HE institution if appropriate. Where possible, if a destination is known in advance, the future institution will be invited to the final PEP to confirm transition arrangements. All Year 11 Looked After Children will be asked if they would like their preferred post-16 provider to be invited to their PEP as required by the LA guidance.

## **8. Complaints Procedure**

If a LAC, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the LAC, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Principal, in which case the complaint will go straight to the Chair of the Academy Council.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the LAC's education. This meeting may include the named Councillor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Principal's response.

Students who wish to make a formal complaint against the Academy or about their care will be advised of the support available for Looked After Children through their Local Authority website.