



Co-op Academy  
Leeds

# Children Looked After Policy

December 2020

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## Children Looked After Policy

‘Aim to create a network that is diverse, promotes inclusion and supports everyone to develop and achieve, regardless of background characteristics,’ EEF.

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Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lauren Whyte (Policy Author)

Designated governor at Coop Academy Leeds: Julian Gordon

## Safeguarding Statement

The Co-op Academy Leeds is committed to safeguarding every student. We acknowledge that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and ensure all of our staff are trained to be vigilant and aware of the signs and indicators of abuse and understand and follow safe working practices. The viewpoints and voice of students is of paramount importance to our academy and we will always listen to their wishes, thoughts and feelings, as well as identifying and supporting their needs.

We will work alongside students to develop trusting, consistent and professional relationships and show we care by advocating the early help processes where possible. We will identify any difficulties or concerns early in order to act preventatively.

We will always provide support and advice for families and parents/carers, whilst acting in the best interests of the student at all times and doing what matters most.

Safeguarding also includes ensuring we work in an open and honest way, enabling our children to feel safe by providing a secure learning environment, are equally protected regardless of any barriers they may face and are able to grow and develop in the same way as their peers.

Co-op Academy Leeds safeguards students by:

- Maintaining a secure site and ensuring that all visitors to the academy are recorded, monitored and clear about how to raise a safeguarding concern should one arise.
- Ensuring that safer recruitment practices are followed to prevent those who pose a risk to children gaining access to our students.
- Filtering and monitoring all internet traffic into the academy to ensure that children cannot be exposed to harmful material and communication.
- Ensuring that all staff employed by the academy have received all necessary pre-employment checks, which are recorded in the single central record (SCR)

- Providing regular training and briefings for all staff, and volunteers, in child protection and ensuring that all staff, volunteers and visitors know who our designated safeguarding officers and designated senior lead are.
- Ensuring that admission and attendance procedures are robust to protect children, ensure that they are safe and prevent children from going missing from education.
- Empowering young people to identify risks both within the academy and in their community; ensuring that they have the skills and confidence to help and protect themselves and others

## Definition

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. 'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

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).

**Children Looked After Reviews**, involving the school, will take Children Looked After up until a time of an adoption order has been granted. However, Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for Children Looked After until they are 16 years old.

This policy includes requirements set out in “statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” and associated guidance on the education of Children Looked After

## Rationale

Children Looked After (CLA ) and previously Children Looked After (PCLA ) are children who are in need of additional protection. National statistics (2018-2019) show that the

number of Children Looked After is continuing to increase over the years with the number of Children Looked After in England up by 4% to 78,150 at 31 March 2019. They are one of the most vulnerable groups within our communities with a relatively even split between the gender of these children with just over half being male (56%). The largest age group (39%) are aged 10-15 years and 18% are aged 5-9 years.

Unfortunately, these children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers and other groups. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 75% of Children Looked After leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping Children Looked After succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our academy.

In addition, emotional and behavioural health (SDQ scores) indicated that 39% had scores which were a cause for concern (same as 2018). Across almost all ages, boys are more likely to have scores which were a cause for concern. It is recognised that schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After and in tackling the cause of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, as an academy, we must do what matters most in ensuring that Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

Coop Academy Leeds, part of the Cooperatives Academies Trust, believes that in partnership with Leeds County Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children Looked After

## Responsibility of the Principal

- Nominate a designated teacher that must be a qualified teacher or a member of staff who is likely to gain QTS by September 2014, whose role is set out below.
- It is a priority that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the designated teacher leave the academy or in their absence.
- Ensuring any appropriate training is available for the designated teacher, staff in the academy receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that procedures who are Previously Children Looked After, to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Children Looked After and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Ensure all children will have a personal education plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

## Responsibility of the Governing Body

- The academy's governor will ensure that the needs of Children Looked After in the academy are taken into account at an academy management level and to support the designated teacher.
- Support the designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Children Looked After

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children Looked After:
  - The Education (Admission of Children Looked After England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learner.) A Practical Guide for School Governors).
  - Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children Looked After
  - Allocate resources to meet the needs of Children Looked After
  - Ensure the academy's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
  - Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children Looked After are recognised and met.

Receive a termly report setting out:

1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

## The role of the Designated Teacher

- The role became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Persons' Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) and the designated teacher for Children Looked After will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Ideally, s/he should be a senior member of staff who has enough status and experience to advise and provide training to academy staff on issues relating to Children Looked After. They need to be able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning of these children.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education achieving stability and continuity.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes through the cooperative values alongside the cooperative ways of being so that the child can be themselves always, show care to others and do what matters most when succeeding together as a valued member of the academy.
- 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 and arrangements are put in Previously Children Looked After review to ensure their needs are identified and met.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.

- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Children Looked After in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- 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 child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Coordinate any support for the Children Looked After that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage Children Looked After may face.
  - Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
  - Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage Children Looked After to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware that 60% of Children Looked After say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Children Looked After

## The Responsibility of all the staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children Looked After, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Children Looked After 's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Children Looked After to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Children Looked After
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of Children Looked After
- Be aware that 60% of Children Looked After say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

## Confidentiality

Information on Children Looked After will be shared with academy staff on a “need to know” basis

The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

## Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Children Looked After and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Children Looked After or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the Children Looked After /YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

## Exclusions

Coop Academy Leeds recognises that Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to exclusions.

Where a Children Looked After is at risk of exclusion the academy will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person’s Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Please refer to the Academy’s Behaviour Policy and Behaviour Addendum for more information.

## Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Children Looked After

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Children Looked After, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Children Looked After who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

The Governing body will ensure that the academy allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Children Looked After, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

## Home-school liaison

The academy recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and academy and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Children Looked After to achieve their potential. PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

## Admission arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements Children Looked After may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

The academy recognises that Children Looked After are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Children Looked After in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Children Looked After (England) Regulations 2006).

## Links with other agencies

The academy recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Achieve; Youth Offending Teams.

- One Minute Guide – Children Looked After Service  
<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/73%20-%20Looked%20after%20Child%20-%20April%202015.pdf>
- LSCP Guidance  
[https://leedschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/pr\\_contacts.html](https://leedschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/pr_contacts.html)
- LSCP Missing Procedure CLA <https://www.leedsscp.org.uk/Practitioners/Child-Exploitation-and-Children-Missing-from-Home/Children-who-go-missing/Children-looked-after-placed-in-Leeds>

## Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is scaffolded and personalised for the performance of all groups and individuals. Cooperative Academy is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.