



**GEORGE
SALTER
ACADEMY**



Looked After Children Policy

Policy Prepared by: OAT

Responsible for policy: Miss T. Dale (Safeguarding Officer)

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1. Policy statement and principles

1.1 Policy aims and principles

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority, or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions¹. Children that fall within this definition are referred to as looked after children (LAC).

Nationally, children who are looked after significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We recognise that we have a major part to play in ensuring that children who are looked after are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being, in line with the Every Child Matters agenda.

The role we play in our students' lives are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of children who are looked after.

We aim to provide a source of continuity and "normality" for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption and will tackle the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of children who are looked after and we understand the pivotal role we play in this.

The academy's approach to supporting the educational achievement of children who are looked after is based on the following objectives:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each child who is looked after has a current Personal Education Plan in place
- Promote inclusion by providing a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the academy experience fully
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family
- Ensure that there is a designated teacher appointed and that they are provided with regular training
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within the academy and with outside agencies
- Endeavour to support the needs of all children who are looked after that are educated in this academy
- Support and encourage students to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential
- Promote and encourage improved attendance

This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by OAT / the academy and is written in line with current legislation and guidance.

¹ Definition from Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989

1.2 Complaints

All complaints are dealt with under the **OAT Complaints Policy**.

Complaints should be made in writing and will follow the OAT complaint procedures and set timescales. The handling of complaints may be delegated to an appropriate person.

The outcome of the complaint will be communicated in writing.

1.3 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and / or government guidance
- As a result of any other significant change or event
- In the event that the policy is determined not to be effective

If there are urgent concerns these should be raised to Tina Dale in the first instance, for him to determine whether a review of the policy is required in advance of the review date.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Key personnel

Designated Teacher		Tina Dale
Contact Details	Email	Tina.dale@georgesalter.com
	Telephone	0121 553 4665

2.2 Roles

- The Designated Teacher to oversee the provision and costing of extra support
- The DSEN Development and Admin Coordinator will support and advise the Designated Teacher and Pastoral Managers in their outlined duties.
- Student Welfare Managers to act as the 'named member of staff' and attend individual students' Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and agree the plans with the Designated Social Worker and guardian
- Heads of House to track attendance and academic progress, informing the Designated Teacher and member of staff if intervention or further support is required.

3. Procedures

3.1 Admissions / transition arrangements

Children who are looked after are a priority for admission this is recognised in our admissions policy's oversubscription criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our academy.

Records will be requested from the child's previous placement and as soon as practicable after the records are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan (PEP), and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires academy reports and who may give permission for trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed.

3.2 Personal Education Plan

Each child who is looked after will have a PEP, which their social worker will take the lead in developing. The academy's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate and the child's opinions will also be important throughout the development and review of the PEP.

The PEP will consider the child's:

- Strengths and weaknesses
- Interests, both in and out of the academy
- Developmental, educational and pastoral needs
- Future plans, and how these can be supported

The PEP will also identify any issues arising for the child and put in place targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

The PEP will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs of the child and to ensure that the academy are offering the best possible support to the child.

3.3 Confidentiality

Many children who are looked after do not want academy staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status however we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

3.4 Attendance

Attendance at the academy is important to all students overall development. We will monitor students' attendance and identify those with attendance issues and work closely with those students, their carer(s) and any appropriate bodies to improve that the attendance levels of children who are looked after.

3.5 Exclusions

We understand that children who are looked after are disproportionately represented in regards to national exclusions statistics. We will endeavour to support and work with our students to ensure that any issues are identified and early intervention strategies are put in place as a prevention method.