



# WESTFIELD SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

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# ***WESTFIELD SCHOOL***

## ***POLICY DOCUMENT***

### ***Looked After (LAC) and previously Looked After Children***

#### **Aims**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children and previously Looked After children within Westfield School.

#### **Rationale**

Looked after children (LAC) and previously Looked After children are two of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of looked after children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that considerable educational underachievement exists when compared to their peers. Children who have been previously Looked After and since been adopted, continue to experience emotional vulnerability from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

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).

The term 'In Care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the Court under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with Foster Carers, in a Children's Home, in a Residential School, 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.

All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Herefordshire.

### **Introduction**

Westfield School aims to promote the educational attainment, achievement and welfare of looked after children and previously Looked After Children. The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Nicki Gilbert.

The governing body is committed to providing a quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of looked after children.

### **Aims**

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for looked after children as for all children
- ensure that all looked after children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that looked after students take as full a part as possible in school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of looked after students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that looked after students are involved, where possible, in decisions affecting their future provision.

### **Admissions**

The Governing Body endorses the Herefordshire Council Policy for the admission of Looked After Children. Due to changes in care placements, looked after children may enter school at any time in the term. At Westfield School we believe that it is vital that all new students receive a positive welcome and full support for their inclusion in our learning community.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. This Policy reinforces the need for teaching and learning that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all looked after students.

### **Allocation of Resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with Herefordshire Virtual School for looked after children and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that looked after children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Both groups are entitled to pupil premium, which is additional funding available to the school to address any inequity of experience based on their Looked After or previously Looked After status.

Westfield School ensures that this additional funding is allocated to experiences and support aimed at minimizing the impact of their Looked After status, and addressing emotional well-being, and the psychological impact arising from issues directly connected with their previous childhood experiences.

### **Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children**

This school assesses each looked after student's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. A Personal Education Plan – PEP – is created for all Looked After Children, and ensures that the young person is actively involved wherever possible. The PEP is created using Welfare Call, a web-based secure programme, where social care, the virtual school and Westfield School input relevant information to inform future meetings and communication. A PEP meeting occurs every term, where the DLACT provides educational reports to the social worker, education liaison officer from Herefordshire Virtual School (or other Virtual School, where the child is from another Local Authority) and other agencies. The allocation and purpose of the Pupil Premium will be included within the PEP. All PEPs are completed electronically through the online system provided by Welfare Call.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher knows all the looked after children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Herefordshire Virtual School specialist staff, teacher/support worker and social worker. The status of looked after children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available to all classroom teachers and relevant associate staff. LAC are identified as a vulnerable group when tracking, monitoring and reporting on attainment and progress.

### **Staff Development**

Staff are encouraged to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support a LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with LAC within the school and disseminate information. Allocated teachers also attend the LAC reviews and pep meetings wherever feasible.

### **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

We believe in developing strong partnerships with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC pupils to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

### **Links with external agencies/organisations**

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

- Social worker/ Family Support Worker/ Residential support worker
- Virtual School for Looked After Children (Looked After Children in Education Team)
- Other Virtual Schools for looked after children from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists and colleagues from Local Authority
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- External Learning Providers

### **LAC Policy Review and Evaluation**

The Designated Teacher for LAC will undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the impact of the looked after children policy and practice each year and report to the Governing Body.

### **Sources of Additional Advice and Information:**

Hilary Jones, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Looked After Children Tel: 01432 260579

07792 881064 [hjones@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hjones@herefordshire.gov.uk)

Annie Finch, Education Liaison Officer Tel: 01432 260560

Promoting the education of looked after children. (DfE Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014)

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020.