

Looked after and previously looked after children policy



Rationale and Aim

Samuel Whitbread Academy (SWA) are committed to providing quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children” 2018, and “The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after Children” 2009.

SWA aims to:

- ensure that policies and procedures are followed for looked after and previously looked after children (LAC and pre-LAC) as for all children.
- ensure that all (LAC and pre-LAC) have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, make progress and achieve exceptional outcomes.
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability.
- ensure that (LAC and pre-LAC) students take as full a part as possible in all academy activities.
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC students are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment.
- ensure that (LAC and pre-LAC) students are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Policy

Under the Children Act 1989 a child is legally defined as ‘looked after’ by a local authority if he or she:

- is provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order
- is subject to a placement order

Previously looked after children are those who:

- are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or
- were adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales. ‘State care’ is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

All looked-after and previously looked-after children will have full and equal access to all the opportunities available at SWA.

There will be a designated member of staff for looked-after and previously looked-after children. At Samuel Whitbread the designated teacher is Jenny Swift

Procedure

Admissions

All looked-after children have been given the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The Governing Body endorse council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against looked-after

children. This stance is also endorsed by Central Bedfordshire Admissions. Due to care placement changes, looked-after children may enter the academy mid-term. It is vital that these students are given a positive welcome. If necessary, they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new student settle.

Inclusion

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

The PEP (Personal Education Plan)

Every looked-after child must have a PEP, and it must be used to support the personalised learning of the child. It is coordinated in school by the designated teacher and overseen by the child's Virtual School. It is vital that the academy assesses each looked-after child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The academy will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all students at regular intervals. Looked-after children will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs. The young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

As part of the PEP process there should be robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are addressed through the SEND framework as soon as possible.

Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the academy allocates resources to support appropriate provision for looked-after and previously looked-after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who all the looked-after and previously looked-after children are and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any looked-after children placed in the academy from other authorities. A child's looked-after and previously looked-after status will be recorded on the school MIS.

Staff Development

The academy encourages staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support looked-after and previously looked-after children. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

SWA firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

The Role of the Designated Teacher

- To be a central point of initial contact within the school;
- To lead in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll;
- To take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked after children learn;

- To ensure that there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
- To ensure that transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively, including careers advice and guidance;
- To remind parents and guardians of previously looked-after children that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+;
- To ensure that there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils;
- Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children;
 - are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
 - are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
 - are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
 - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
 - can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
- To be a source of advice for teachers regarding adapted learning;
- To work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:
 - promote good home-school links;
 - support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
 - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
- To have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked after children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary; and
- To work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.

All academy staff will:

- follow academy procedures;
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a looked-after or previously looked-after children's progress;
- have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and

- for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the academy's Pupil Premium Policy, which can be found on the school website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored by the Designated Teacher in the academy.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and governors, and published on the academy website. Copies are also available upon request from the academy office. This policy will be reviewed annually or as required.

Author and Date

Assistant Principal – Designated Teacher (T. Rowell) – August 2015

Updated (T. Rowell) – June 2016

Updated (TR) November 2018

Reviewed (TR) – February 2021

Reviewed (TR) – January 2023

Reviewed (TR) – December 2024

Reviewed (RG) - February 2026

Date ratified by Governors – March 2026

Next review date – February 2027