

***Looked-After Children
Policy
March 2023***



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The JCB Academy is committed to providing quality education to all its learners based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes.
- 1.2 The academy recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children who are 'looked-after' when compared with their peers. Many looked-after children suffer from a disrupted school experience and have gaps in their learning which become barriers to their progress and life outcomes.
- 1.3 The academy is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children' (2018) and Section 52 of the Children Act (2004).

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Children who are 'looked-after' (as defined in The Children Act (1989)) may be 'accommodated', 'in care' or 'remanded/detained' as follows:
 - Accommodated. This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents¹ are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.
 - In care. A child is in care only if a court has granted a care order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.
 - Remanded/detained. A child can be remanded or detained following:
 - An emergency protection order.
 - Removal by police using their powers of protection.
 - Remanded by a court following criminal charges.
 - A court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

¹ Within this document, the term *parent* refers to those with parental responsibility for a learner

3. Issues

- 3.1 The academy understands that looked-after children are prevalent to a range of issues, including, but not limited to, those indicated below:
- Low self-esteem and feelings of poor self-worth.
 - Trust issues towards adults, particularly adults in authoritative roles.
 - Poor educational engagement and gaps in knowledge due to a disrupted educational history.
 - Delayed social/emotional/cognitive development.
 - Display bullying behaviour or have experience of being bullied by others, sometimes specifically due to their care status.
 - more prone to mental health issues.
 - Isolated and have few established friendships due to their life experiences and propensity for moving home and school frequently.
 - Display challenging behaviours.
 - Have poor attachments to others.

These issues can make them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

- 3.2 The above list is not exhaustive and the academy recognises that each looked-after child is an individual with their own likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, background and family circumstances. The academy will strive to ensure that learners who are looked-after children are valued as individuals and that the support they are offered is in line with their own specific assessed needs.

- 3.3 The academy is committed to ensuring that looked-after children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:
- A Designated Teacher for looked-after children.
 - A Designated DSL with responsibility for looked-after children.
 - Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all looked-after children.
 - The most intensive level of mentoring support and pastoral care.
 - Clear understanding amongst all staff of confidentiality and issues that affect looked-after children.
 - Effective practices in place which enable a looked-after child to have a voice, engage in processes and have a sense of ownership regarding their educational experiences.



- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.
- Effective professional relationships with the learner's corporate parent and other key adults and professionals involved with the learner

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Designated Teacher. Working collaboratively with the Learner Wellbeing & Safeguarding Team Leader, the Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for learners who are looked-after children.
- Ensure a smooth transition and induction for a learner who is a looked-after child and his/her carer, noting any specific requirements, including care status.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Planning Meeting (PEP) is completed as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or joining the academy). This should be prepared with the learner and their carer(s) in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/ external agencies. The PEP should also be linked to the outcomes and action points detailed in care plans.
- Ensure that PEPs and other records are kept up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings.
- Ensure that, if they wish, each learner who is a looked-after child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to; this may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher and is likely to be the learner's Mentor.
- Co-ordinate support in the academy for learners who are looked-after children, liaising with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training, acting as an advisor to staff and Trustees.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual learners and only share personal information on a need to know basis.
- Ensure that written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible.
- Ensure that learners who are looked-after children and their carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when learners transfer.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the learner is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being suspended or permanently excluded.



- Ensure that returns on looked-after children are completed as requested by local authorities
- Report annually to the Board of Trustees on the progress of each learner who is a looked-after child. (These reports should not include any names of individual learners for child protection and confidentiality reasons.)

4.2 All staff. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to:

- Ensure that any learner who is a looked-after child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Respond positively to any requests from learners who are looked-after children to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Contribute to the Learner Wellbeing & Safeguarding Team Leader's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- Ensure, as with all learners, that no learner who is a looked-after child is stigmatised in any way.
- Provide a supportive environment to enable a learner who is a looked-after child to achieve stability within the academy setting.
- As with all learners, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked-after children.
- Positively promote the self-esteem of learners who are looked-after children.

4.3 Board of Trustees. The Board will:

- Ensure all Trustees are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for looked-after children.
- Be aware of whether the academy has looked-after children on their roll, which year group they are in and what is in place to support them.
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher and named DSL having responsibility for looked-after children.



- Liaise with the Principal to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to looked-after children.
- Support the Principal, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of looked-after children are met.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 Information on looked-after children will be shared with relevant academy staff on a need to know basis only.
- 5.2 The Designated Teacher and Learner Wellbeing & Safeguarding Team Leader will discuss what information is shared with which academy staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, learner and other parties, complete confidentiality will be maintained.

6. Training

The Designated Teacher and Learner Wellbeing & Safeguarding Team Leader will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practices outlined in this policy.

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