

Bedford College Academies Trust

Children Looked After Policy

Status: Statutory	Member of staff responsible: Headteacher	Implementation date: September 2021
Issue No: 1A	Approved by: Wixams Tree Local Advisory Board	Next Review Date: September 2023

Our Vision

“The BCAT vision is to support students to achieve their absolute best whatever their ability or background. We aim to:

1. Work collaboratively to deliver an inclusive and outstanding education to all students, thereby driving up local standards.
2. Maximise social mobility and life chances, through the highest expectations of and aspirations for all students.
3. Encourage and support a range of high performing and distinctive educational establishments for local communities.”

Our Values

Student focus - We will seek to achieve a high quality learning experience for every student

High performance - We will strive for consistently high levels of performance in all aspects of our work.

Respect, openness and honesty - We will treat everyone with respect, encourage openness and honesty, and recognise each other's contribution and achievements.

1) Rationale

Looked After Children (CLA) are one 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 under-achievement exists when compared to their peers. This can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Looked After Children progressing to Higher Education or following progression pathways leading to future economic success and well-being.

Under the Children Act 1989, “looked after children” is the collective term for children who are the subject of care orders or interim care orders; who have been provided by the local authority with accommodation for more than 24 hours either under section 20 or for their own protection or by virtue of an order made in criminal proceedings; or who have been pCLAed with prospective adopters by a local authority.

The term “In Care” refers only to children who are in the care of a local authority by virtue of a care order made under Section 38 1989 Act. Children in public care may live in a children’s home cared for by residential social workers or with foster carers. The vast majority of children in public care are because their parents are experiencing difficulties. They may also reside in a Residential School, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

All these groups are said to be “Children Looked After” (CLA). They may be looked after by Bedford Borough Council or maybe be in the care of another authority but living in Bedford.

2) Introduction

Bedford College Academies Trust (BCAT) aims to promote the educational attainment, achievement, and welfare of Looked After Children.

Wixams Tree Designated Teacher for Children looked after is Kelly Pestell.

The Local Advisory Board member with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Aoife Greaves.

The Local advisory 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” (November 2005) and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children”.

BCAT believes in the principals of good parenting by:

- Giving priority education
- Listening to children
- Providing stability and continuity
- Taking corporate responsibility
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising standards
- Intervening early
- Celebrating success

3) Aims of the policy

- Ensure that the Academy policies and procedures are followed for Children Looked After as for all children.
- Ensure that all Children Looked After have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
 - Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual 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 practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

4) Admissions

The Local Advisory Body endorses the Bedford Borough Council Policy for the admission of Children Looked After. Due to changes in care, Children Looked After may enter school at any time in the term. BCAT believes that it is vital that we give each Looked After Child a positive welcome and full support for their introduction to help them settle and be part of our learning community.

5) Inclusion

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our CLA 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.

6) Allocation of resources

The Local Advisory Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with Bedford Borough Council who have responsibility for Children Looked After and other Local Authorities, to ensure that Children Looked After receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

7) Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

BCAT assesses each Looked After Student's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The Designated Teacher ensures that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is created within 20 days of the student joining the Academy. Following the PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP review meetings and to provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, carer and other agencies.

8) Record keeping

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

9) Staff development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support a CLA. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with CLA within the school and disseminate information as appropriate.

10) Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

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

11) Links with external agencies/organisations

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

- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential childcare worker
- Looked after children in Education Team
- Looked after children from other Local authorities
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- Educational Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- External Learning Providers
- Parent Support Advisor
- EP Youth

12) CLA policy review and evaluation

The Designated Teacher will undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the impact of Children Looked After and practice each year and report to the Local Advisory Body.

13) Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for Children Looked After with school
- Be proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise attainment of Children Looked After
- Work in partnership with Bedford Borough Council CLA Team, and other Local Authorities
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for CLA on both the Children Looked After and the rest of the community
- Know all the CLA in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant courses on CLA and disseminate information and good practice to other staff
- Influence school policy and practice for CLA
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and Carers in relation to CLA
- Ensure that CLA receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new student settle
- Ensure that all CLA have an appropriate PEP that is completed when joining the school or of entering care and ensure that young person contributes to the plan
- Arrange and contribute to PEP Review meetings
- Keep PEP and other records up-to-date
- Monitor the targets set out in the PEP
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if CLA is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality of CLA
- Act as key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to CLA
- Ensure speedy transfer of information, records and coursework when CLA transfers to another establishment
- Ensure any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO
- Ensure CLA funding is spent appropriately to support educational needs of CLA students

All school staff will:

- Positively promote the raising of a CLA child's esteem
- Have high expectation of the educational and personal achievements of CLA
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about CLA child's progress
- Ensure any CLA are supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Follow school procedures
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on CLA and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a CLA is experiencing difficulties
- Keep appropriate records, confidentiality as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher.

The Local Advisory Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises CLA according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher responsible for CLA
- Liaise with the Principal, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of CLA are met

- Nominate a LAB member with responsibility for CLA who links with the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give CLA equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
 - Additional educational support
 - Work experience and careers guidance
 - Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA
- In the event of an exclusion, ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meeting of CLA.