



## Looked after children policy

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### Policy Version Control

Policy prepared by	OAT Model Policy
Responsible committee	Governing Body
Date approved by committee	N/A
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Description of changes from the model policy (if any)	1.

**Chair's signature: David Sword**

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

# Ormiston Academies Trust

## Looked after children policy

### Policy Version Control

Policy type	Academy Model Policy
Policy prepared by (name and department)	Nicki Wadley, Head of Governance
Last review date	November 2015
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Name and date of line manager's approval	Julie Bloor, Executive Head and Regional Director. 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
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# I. Policy statement and principles

## I.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 functions<sup>1</sup>. Children that fall within this definition are referred to as looked after children.

Nationally, looked after children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Approximately two thirds of looked after children have special educational needs and we recognise that we have a major part to play in ensuring that looked after children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

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

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 looked after children and we understand the pivotal role we play in this.

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

Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place

Promote inclusion by providing a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes

Ensure all looked after children 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 looked after children 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 looked after children 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.

## I.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.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition from Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989  
Looked after children policy

### 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 the Principal in the first instance for them 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		Jemma Harding (Vice Principal)
Contact Details	Email	jharding@cowesenterprisecollege.org.uk
	Telephone	01983 203103

## 3. Procedures

### 3.1 Admissions / transition arrangements

Looked after children and previously looked after children<sup>2</sup> are a priority for admission this is recognised in our admissions policy's oversubscription criteria.

On admission, a looked after 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 looked after child 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.

<sup>2</sup> Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).

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 looked after children 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 looked after children.

### 3.5 Exclusions

We understand that looked after children 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.