

Looked After Children, Care Leavers, and Young Carers Policy

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1. Introduction

At Hugh Baird College we aim to promote the achievement of every student. This policy is in place to provide specifically for all the needs of learners who are looked after children (LAC), care leavers (CL) and young carers (YC) and whom we feel may be particularly vulnerable members of our college community.

The object of the Policy is;

- To promote the educational achievement, welfare and successful progression of looked after students, care leavers and young carers.

2. Definition of Looked After Children, Care Leavers, Young Carers

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after' by the local authority.

Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days in a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a young person on a Care Order can be living with:

- foster carers
- in a children's home
- in a residential school
- with relatives, or
- with parents – under the supervision of Social Care.

Similarly, an 'accommodated' young person can be living:

- in a foster care
- in a children's home
- in a residential school
- or with parents.

However, were a young person becomes estranged from their main carer, post 16, it will be Connexions who will support that young person finding accommodation, sources of finance etc. and not the Local Authority.

A care leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date.

A young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem.

3. Named Staff for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Young Carers and Responsibilities

Louise Noon, Student Services Manager is responsible for overseeing the work of the members of staff with responsibility for the day to day care of Looked after Children and Care Leavers at all of the College Campuses with the exception of the South Sefton Campus.

Ian Seddon, Vice Principal, Pastoral, is responsible for overseeing the work of the members of staff with responsibility for the day to day care of Looked After Children and Care Leavers at South Sefton Campus. In turn they will work closely with Connexions who facilitate liaison between all parties involved in the welfare of the looked after child and care leavers.

The Role of the Named member of staff is:

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by young people who are 'looked after', care leavers or young carers and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome the barriers these young people will face.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of young people who are looked after, care leavers or young carers, and to promote the involvement of these students in extracurricular activities, for example trips and visits, enrichment opportunities, UCAS, etc.
- To hold a supervisory brief for those students being looked after, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to college staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with Connexions, Carers and Social Care in monitoring attendance and achievement and so acting to address these issues if they arise through early and positive intervention.

- To ensure the names of all students whom are Looked after Children, Care Leavers or Young Carers are included in the colleges list of learners possibly at risk of under achieving or not completing their full programme.
- To work with individual young people, possibly through a carer or Connexions, to arrive at a statement about their circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or students.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to Social Care planning meetings.
- Monitor on the progress of all looked after children, care leavers and young carers.

4. Role of the Named Governor

Christina Donovan as the named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of looked after, care leaver or young carers students in the college.
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other students.
- The attendance of students as a discrete group, compared to other students.
- Analysis of the Student Discipline Process in relation to looked after young people, care leavers and young carers.
- Student destinations.

The named governor, should be satisfied that the College's policies and procedures ensure that looked after students, care leavers and young carers have equal access to:

- The curriculum
- Public Examinations
- Careers Guidance including UCAS and advice on employment
- Extra-Curricular Activities including Enrichment
- Additional Educational Support (if required).

5. Responsibilities for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Young Carers in College

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority, is a Care Leaver or a Young Carer with the student's permission. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Vice Principal, Pastoral, Ian Seddon for South Sefton Campus and the Retention and Progression Team for all other Hugh Baird College Campuses.

6. Involving the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances and that this is shared with them. The explanation should emphasise that the College, Social Worker, Connexions and their carers(s) are working together to promote their education and well-being.

7. Communication with other Agencies

Ideally, the social worker and the college named person should meet when the young person joins the college. This will enable information concerning the student's progress and circumstances to be shared. Connexions have a central role in facilitating such liaison.

The College will ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. end of year) should be forwarded to the young person's social worker in addition to, for example, the foster carer or residential social worker.

The College, the Education Service, Social Care and Connexions will endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, where possible. However, it is for the student to nominate who they feel should be their college representative at any such meetings.

Social Care, Education and the College will exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if the college is considering a withdrawal, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues or under achievement.

8. Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Each looked after, care leaver or young carers student will be monitored, in line with all learners, to ensure;

- Robust attendance
- Achievement relative to ALPs scores
- Behaviour
- Homework/assignment work
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities
- Special Needs (if any)
- Development Needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).

Liaison will be undertaken with Education Welfare/Education Psychology/Social Care, etc. in the assessment and review processes as appropriate. The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the key indicators outlined under section 4 above.

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