



The Park
Academies
Trust

Care Experienced Children Policy

(Previously known as Children Looked After or Looked after Children Policy)

TPAT Policy Management

Document history					
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This policy is reviewed every two years. The next review is due by October 2027.

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1. Introduction

The Trust intends and expects that all decisions, policies and procedures will be underpinned at all times by its vision and values.

Our aim:

TPAT - Inspiring futures, empowering people.

We aim to benefit our communities by nurturing well-educated, aspirational and creative young people. We exist to inspire futures and empower all our people. We achieve this by enriching and fulfilling our employees with the investment to become masters of their craft, all working together to realise exceptional outcomes for young people.

To achieve this our schools will:

- Create an aspirational, driven, and highly engaging educational environment where every pupil can succeed.
- Commit to knowing each pupil individually and empowering them to excel.
- Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers.
- Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society

The Trust will support our schools by:

- Providing the resources and stability schools need to work efficiently and effectively, overcoming challenges and prioritising education every day.
- Providing a platform for collaboration, sharing excellence and experience, and fostering unity and shared purpose.
- Nurturing our Trust's 'culture of improvement' where staff thrive in a safe, supportive network, embracing feedback and professional dialogue to drive sustainable improvement

At The Park Academies Trust (TPAT) Schools we believe that all Care experienced children should have equitable access to excellent educational provision. As a community we aim to be champions for Care experienced children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development.

To do this we commit to:

- Supporting them to raise their aspirations;
- Giving them a sense of the control, they have over their own lives;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

To achieve this our schools will:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents and ambitions
- Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers

- Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society.

We will continue to:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly-based education for all Care experienced children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of Care experienced children
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions for all Care experienced children
- Ensure there is a (qualified) Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of all Care experienced children who are on the school roll
- Develop effective systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of Care experienced children

1.1 Aims and Scope

The Park Academies Trust endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. We recognise that Care experienced children require specific support to enable this and with this in mind, we aim to:

- Create a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their responsibility in supporting the role of Corporate Parent;
- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
- Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Balance high levels of support with challenge and high expectation to ensure rapid progress;
- Have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Care experienced children who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, parents (as appropriate) and Social Workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues;
- Work alongside the Social Worker, Virtual School and other professionals to ensure that each Child in Care has a current, good quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes challenging, curriculum-based targets and is an effective tool which supports the young person and helps them make excellent progress;
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to provide additional, personalised support as identified in the Personal Education Plan;

- Closely monitor each child's attendance and academic progress, working and sharing information in a timely manner with the Virtual School to help ensure each child achieves the best possible educational outcomes;
- Ensure there is a well-planned and coordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented;
- Plan for future transitions effectively including planning for transport.

In addition we will:

- Challenge negative stereotypes amongst students and staff;
- Closely monitor the social and personal progress of all Care experienced children;
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's Care status and the background and family history of children who are in Care, especially surrounding teaching and learning relating to the family;
- Ensure a clear protocol is followed in the sharing of information, both within school and with outside agencies.

Attendance – please see the Trust Attendance Policy

We will:

- Ensure that all Care experienced children meet the Designated Teacher who will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral;
- Ensure a warm welcome to our school by providing appropriate induction for all Care experienced children so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate;
- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information records are obtained and received;
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition (where the receiving school is made known);
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

School trips and special activities

We aim to ensure that Care experienced children enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by prioritising places for them on trips or enrichment activities for which they are eligible. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the Social Worker, sometimes delegated to Foster Carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or Social Worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should, in the first instance, raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and Social Worker.

1.2 Who are Care experienced Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers or potential adoptive parents, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care or with potential adoptive parents, in a Children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be 'Care experienced children'. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

1.3 Other Linked Policies and Legislation

Linked policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy

Linked Legislation and Statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989

- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

2. Policy Statement

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for CLA and previously-CLA are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation. This policy applies to all pupils who are in care or have previously been in care.

2.1 Policy Terms

For the purpose of this policy a "Care experienced children" is Looked after or Previously looked after. (see definition Appendices 4.1)

3. Guidance and Procedures

3.1 Trust Board Responsibilities

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Trust has a coherent policy for Care experienced children
- Reviewing the Trusts policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teachers for Care experienced children have received the appropriate training.

- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep Care experienced children safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst Care experienced children
- Ensuring Care experienced children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and those reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of Care experienced children in the school.

3.2 Headteacher Responsibilities

The Principal / Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for Care experienced children
- Allowing the designated teacher, the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting Care experienced children is a key priority.
 - Ensuring PP+ for Care experienced children is managed effectively.
 - Ensure the designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of Care experienced children have received the appropriate annual training, this may include information about the following:
 - School admissions arrangements
 - SEND
 - Understanding social, emotional and mental health needs
 - Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
 - Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
 - Safeguarding

3.3 Designated Teacher Responsibilities

The designated teacher for care experienced children is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to Care experienced children

- Ensuring all Care experienced children must have three PEPs a year. The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- Promoting the educational achievement of Care experienced children at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring Care experienced children are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for Care experienced children
- Ensuring that Care experienced children are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENDCo to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding Care experienced children due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Work with the VSH to identify that suitable education provided by the LA needs to be found, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all Care experienced children.

3.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities

The DSL is responsible for:

- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding Care experienced children as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.

3.5 Staff Responsibilities

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of Care experienced children and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards Care experienced children.

- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding Care experienced children due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
Promoting the self-esteem of Care experienced children
- Reporting progress information for the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to the designated teacher three times a year.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work

3.6 Local Governing Committee Responsibilities

- To support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- To ensure that the DT is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- In partnership with the head teacher, ensure that, through their training and development, the DT has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand the respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of Care experienced children.
- Governing bodies and the SLT should make sure that the DT role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting Care experienced children to achieve.
- The governing body, in partnership with the head teacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the DT.

4. Appendices

4.1 Definitions

“Care experienced children” are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children’s residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents. Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

4.2 Further Information

[Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children statutory guidance for local authorities](#)