



CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

POLICY :

Looked After Children

Author: Chief Executive Officer

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Review Body: Trust Board

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Please note that this policy is one of the suite of CAT Policies for School Standards Boards to acknowledge.

CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

Looked After Children Policy

Our policies refer to Senior Leaders. This can mean Executive Head Teacher, Head Teacher or Head of School.

WHO ARE OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN?

‘Looked After’ is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority are sharing parental responsibility. This is known as a child in care (CIC) or a looked after child (LAC).

This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

RATIONALE

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, LAC are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances.

Castleman Academy Trust recognises that Looked After Children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. We believe that our schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Castleman Academy Trust (CAT) is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

CAT Schools have a designated governor with responsibility for LAC. CAT Schools also have a designated teacher who has responsibility for LAC. Please refer to the school office for names and contact details if required.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL STANDARDS BOARD

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise Looked After Children according to the Admission Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher for Looked After Children

- Liaise with the Headteacher, designated teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the designated teacher
- Receive reports from the designated teacher which should include:
 - the number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan
 - their attendance, compared to other pupils
 - their attainment compared to other pupils
 - the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of
 - Admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations
 - Out of school learning and extracurricular activities
- Review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children

HEADTEACHER

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person be identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance, and any exclusion of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

DESIGNATED TEACHER

- Be an advocate for Looked After Children.
- Attend relevant training for Looked After Children.
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and individuals in relation to Looked After Children seeking advice when appropriate.
- Ensure that all Looked After Children receive a positive reintegration on entering the school.
- Ensure that all Looked After Children have an appropriate Personal Education Plan and that it is completed within 14 days of joining the school or of entering care (Dorset's Guidance on Personal Education Plans is helpful).
- Keep Personal Education Plans and other records up to date and reviewed appropriately.
- Convene an urgent multi professional meeting if a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties or at risk of suspension.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential/personal information on a need to know basis.
- Act as the key advisor for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children.
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events.
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extracurricular activities for Looked After Children.
- Ensure speedy transfer of information when a Child Looked After transfers into another educational placement..
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required.

- Provide regular reports to the School Standards Board regarding LAC in the school and relevant policy and practice development.

WHOLE SCHOOL STAFF

- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.
- Positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self-esteem.
- Ensure any Looked After Child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support Personal Education Plans and review meetings.
- Respond positively to the request to be a Looked After Child's named person.
- Liaise with the designated teachers where a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties
- Give only official suspensions and only use suspensions as a last resort, in line with statutory regulations and The Castleman Academy Trust Suspension and Exclusion Policy.
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals.
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals.

SUSPENSIONS

Looked After Children are particularly vulnerable to suspensions. In this situation, the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of suspension. The child's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent a suspension from happening.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of LAC. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC, including those who are underachieving, at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

The School Standards Board will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. Effective use will be made of any delegated Pupil Premium+ funding for this purpose.

HOME-SCHOOL LIAISON

CAT schools recognise the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Parents evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations. We will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant safeguarding policies (eg: Equality, Social Networking, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, SEND, Confidentiality, Whistleblowing, Behaviour and Anti Bullying)

EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Trust does all it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against pupils or others, either directly or indirectly, in line with any Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics.