



Looked After Children Policy

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Looked After Children Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Children and young people become 'Looked After' either if they have been taken into care by the Local Authority, or have been 'Accommodated' by the Local Authority (a voluntary care arrangement).
- 1.2. The majority of 'Looked After Children' will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even placed back at home with their natural parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.
- 1.3. South Gloucestershire & Stroud College (SGS) 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.

2. Policy Statement and Scope

- 2.1. Since the mid-seventies, there has been concern that the educational achievements of children in care, as a cohort, have fallen well below that of their peers. It is also recognised that a successful education can play a huge part in helping young people escape from social deprivation and act as a passport to a better life.
- 2.2. It is essential therefore, that SGS actively promotes the education of 'Looked After Children', in order to remove the barriers of stigma and shame about their circumstances.
- 2.3. The 'Every Child Matters' agenda, embodies joint working to promote the 5 outcomes: being healthy, staying safe, making a positive contribution, enjoying and achieving and attaining economic wellbeing.
- 2.4. At SGS, we recognise that sometimes young people with experiences of being in care may want or need a little extra support. We are committed to ensuring our looked after young people receive the best possible opportunities and support to succeed.
- 2.5. The college is also aware of the educational disadvantages faced by looked after young people and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.

3. Policy Objectives

- 3.1. SGS is committed to:
 - 3.1.1. promoting the education and welfare of 'Looked After Children',

- 3.1.2. ensuring that 'Looked After Children' have a voice in issues relating to their education,
- 3.1.3. challenging negative stereotyping and promoting inclusion,
- 3.1.4. targeting support appropriately,
- 3.1.5. ensuring appropriate level of support for parents/carers,
- 3.1.6. ensure that identified 'Looked After Children' and care leavers are fully aware of their eligibility for the new 16-19 Bursary Scheme

4. Policy Implementation

4.1. The College aims to:

- 4.1.1. identify 'Looked After Children' and care leavers upon disclosure:
 - a. Forms, eg. Application/Enrolment/Bursary
 - b. 1 to 1s with tutors/support staff/Learning Mentors/Learner Liaison Officers
 - c. Local Authority (Protocol Agreement)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Governors

- 5.1.1. Governors are responsible for ensuring a 'Looked After Child' Policy is in place and procedures relating to that policy are adhered to.
- 5.1.2. There is a designated member of staff who will be the named Designated Member of Staff for 'Looked After Children'.
- 5.1.3. A named Governor has a link/oversight responsibility for ensuring that the policies are reviewed and in place. This position is currently held by John Huggett.

5.2. Staff

- 5.2.1. It is important that all staff who are in contact with a child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. However, it is important that information around the reasons for the young person being in care is shared on a need to know basis and in accordance with the wishes of the young person.

- 5.2.2. Teaching staff are required to give regular updates on 'Looked After Children' to the designated member of staff. These are in addition to any report and review processes in place for all learners in the college.
- 5.2.3. Staff are to regularly monitor the attendance of 'Looked After Children'. Any issues with regards to absence from college or particular lessons are addressed through the designated person working in partnership with Tutors and Learner Liaison Staff/Learning Mentors.

5.3. Designated Member of Staff

- 5.3.1. The Heads of Learner Services have been designated to be responsible to the Directors of Curriculum, Principal and Governors for the implementation and conduct of those policies and liaison with the relevant authorities.
- 5.3.2. Act as a contact point for all linked agencies, the Local Authority and Social Care and Health and other agencies involved in supporting the young person.
- 5.3.3. Promote understanding and development of policies and resources to support and include 'Looked After Children'.
- 5.3.4. Promote awareness amongst staff of the difficulties and education disadvantages of children who are 'Looked After'.
- 5.3.5. Act as an advocate for young people in public care and to ensure that they have the opportunity to contribute towards their education plan.
- 5.3.6. Ensure that educational information required for the care planning process/court proceedings and Statutory Reviews is available as required and that if asked, the education perspective can be given at such meetings by the designated member of staff or an appropriate college representative.
- 5.3.7. The designated member of staff should ensure that they take full advantage of training available and keep up to date with developments within the area of public care. They should cascade this training to other members of staff.

5.4. The Young Person

- 5.4.1. It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. It should be explained that the College, the Social Worker, designated member of staff and the young person's parent/carer are working together to promote his/her education.
- 5.4.2. It is important to establish the young person's view of their circumstances and identify what they want others to know.

5.5. Communication with Other Agencies

- 5.5.1. The College, through the designated member of staff, should ensure that arrangements are in place to promote effective communication between all those involved with the 'Looked After Child'.
- 5.5.2. Copies of Personal Education Plans, Reviews, reports and attendance, etc, should be forwarded to the dedicated Social Worker as well as to parents/carers in agreement with the Social Worker.

6. **Related Policies and Procedures, Statements, Guidelines and Legislation**

6.1. Primary Legislation

- 6.1.1. Children Act 1989
- 6.1.2. Children and Young People Act 2008
- 6.1.3. Adoption and Children Act 2002
- 6.1.4. The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002

6.2. Guidance and Legislation

- 6.2.1. Improving the Educational Attainment of Children In Care (LAC)

6.3. National Policy

- 6.3.1. Care Matters – Time to Deliver for Children in Care (DfES)
- 6.3.2. Every Child Matters – Change for Children (DfES)

6.4. Supporting College Policies and Procedures

- 6.4.1. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure
- 6.4.2. Single Equality Policy
- 6.4.3. 16 – 19 Bursary Fund Policy and Procedure