

## Springfield Academy

### Looked After & Previously Looked After Children Policy 2025-28

Designated Adults: Hannah Bonser

Designated Safeguarding Leads: Hayley Keen, Hannah Bonser, Louise Ogle, Leanne Oliver, Hayley Bodenham

Governor Responsible:

#### Our Vision

At Springfield we are guided by six key values. Selected after much discussion by pupils, staff, parents and governors together, these values are at the heart of everything we do as a school. We believe that in close partnership we can achieve the best for every child in the school if we all reflect these values, but we must work together.

- Aspiration – we have goals and dreams
- Honesty – we always do the right thing
- Cooperation – everyone is important; we do better working together
- Respect – we respect everyone and everything
- Determination – we keep going even when things get tough
- Responsibility – we all have things we have to do

Springfield Academy recognises that all children are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. We believe that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and should provide a learning environment in which every looked after child (LAC) can be successful.

Nottingham City Local Authority have a duty under the children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. This includes a specific duty to promote the child's educational achievement. They must, therefore, give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children. This includes children who were previously looked after who have been placed for adoption, under special guardianship or subject to a child arrangements order. This policy uses the term looked after children (LAC) to apply to those currently looked after or previously looked after in line with government definitions.

Springfield Academy and their Governing Body endorses Nottingham City Council policy and welcomes looked after children who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Nottingham City.

#### Aims

Springfield Academy's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of LAC is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring that our curriculum is fully inclusive so that all children have equal opportunities to succeed
- Listening to the child
- Working closely with home, voluntary and statutory agencies
- Promoting attendance, through a programme of early intervention, priority action, reducing exclusions and promoting stability within a positive learning environment

- Identifying need, including social and emotional as well as learning needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities
- Targeting support, including accessing resources from other agencies
- Having high expectations.

## **Admission Arrangements**

The choice of education setting is based on what any good parent would want for their child. It should be based on evidence that the setting can meet the education needs of the child and help them make maximum progress. Education provision should mean a full-time place.

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC may enter school mid-terms and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognises that LAC are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the schools' over subscription criteria as per current guidance in the Admissions Code. Full admission criteria is in our Admission Policy.

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body**

- Ensure that the Academy allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC
- Ensure that there is a Designated Lead Adult for LAC
- Ensure that LAC are given priority in the Admission Policy and process

### **Head of School**

- Ensure that the Designated Lead has access to appropriate training
- Ensure that the Designated Lead has appropriate time and resources to fulfil their duties
- Report regularly to governors

### **Designated Adult**

- Ensure that LAC are welcomed into the Academy and that necessary meetings are held and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support including providing school uniform if needed
- Promote a culture that takes account of the child's views according to age and understanding, identifying and meeting their educational needs.
- Take a lead role in establishing a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for all LAC
- Monitor the use and impact of pupil premium plus (PP+) funding. The PP+ allocation is for the benefit of the school's cohort of looked after or previously looked after children and should be used according to children's needs. The guidance states that it is not a personal budget for individual children, however, the Virtual school and school may choose to allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs
- Maintain up to date records and ensure that all necessary information is shared with other staff/agencies as required
- Monitor and track the progress of LAC and intervene if there is evidence of under individual achievement
- Act as advocate for the LAC in school
- Liaise with teaching and non-teaching staff, including person responsible for Child Protection, to ensure they are aware of any difficulties and disadvantage that LACs may face
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies
- In conjunction with the social worker, ensure Personal Education Plan review meetings are held regularly and information passed to all concerned, including the local authority
- Attend training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and guidance regarding LAC
- Liaise with local authority Virtual Schools Head and other external agencies to support LAC.

## **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

All LAC must have an online PEP form and the Designated Teacher must take responsibility for completing the education aspect of this care plan before the review date. It is an evolving record of what needs to happen for LAC to enable them to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances.

The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the school. Relevant professionals need to work together to provide the best possible opportunities for the LAC to succeed.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated by the local authority soon after the LAC starts at the school or has been taken in to care and will be jointly reviewed 3 times a year. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

A high-quality PEP should:

- Be a 'living' evolving, comprehensive and enduring record of the child's progress and achievement
- Inform any discussion about education during statutory reviews of the child's wider care plan
- Link to any other plans relating to the child ie EHCP
- Support any mental health/wellbeing needs
- Include SMART targets and progress monitoring
- Identify actions, timescales and interventions
- Include behaviour management strategies
- Report on attendance
- Be clear on any Alternative Provision the LAC is accessing
- Ensure the child's views are captured and shared through this process

### **Record Keeping and Information Sharing**

The Designated Adult will keep up-to-date records of LAC in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to other staff, without breaking confidentiality where appropriate.

Copies of reports and documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the LAC is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with the child themselves will depend on their age and level of understanding.

### **Exclusions**

Springfield Academy recognises that LAC nationally are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where an LAC is at risk of exclusion, we will try every practicable means to maintain the child in the Academy. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the child to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child's PEP will reflect strategies to support them. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and perhaps alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

LAC and previously LAC are significantly more likely to have SEN than their peers. Some children will have an education healthcare plan (EHCP) which will form a part of the wider care plan. Where a child has individual needs, but no EHCP then additional SEN support should be recorded in the PEP alongside their Edukey plan. If school need to seek outside support/advice for a LAC then school will consult with Social Care with regards to consent.

### **Staff Development and Training**

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Adult is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of LAC.

Other staff will receive training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include English as an additional language (EAL), being gifted and talented or having learning or physical needs. Staff with specific, relevant, responsibilities at the Academy will be kept informed accordingly in order to support the LAC.

### **Home-School Liaison**

Springfield Academy recognises the value of a close working partnership between home and school and will work towards developing a strong relationship with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential.

Consultation evenings as well as review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop with partnership working. Advice will be taken from Social Care representatives as to who should be invited to talk to teachers at consultation evenings.

Where a child is LAC, school will seek advice from Social Care with regards to consent for school trips and residential.

### **Links with Other Agencies**

Springfield Academy recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the LAC, including social care teams; community education psychologists; health services; CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams etc.