

POLICY ON THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	POL-02
	DATE: November 2011

INTRODUCTION

Calderdale Council acknowledges that all children and young people are different and that everyone matters. This is encapsulated in our vision which was created by children and young people: ***everyone different, everyone matters.***

Children and Young People's Services Directorate will work together to ensure that children and young people in Calderdale:

- Start healthy and stay healthy
- Are safe at home and in the community
- Enjoy school and achieve their best
- Make friends and take part in activities
- Stay in education and get a job

The Directorate has a key role in ensuring that there is a highly effective partnership between the Local Authority, all schools and a range of partners including families that delivers the directorate vision and ensures children and young people have every opportunity to fulfil their potential and enhance their life chances.

The Council acknowledges that looked after children (children in public care) are amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and recognises the importance of education to looked after children as a passport to better chances in life.

The Council acknowledges its duty under the Children Act, as the corporate parent, to safeguard and promote the education of looked after children and give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children from pre-school up to the age of twenty four. The Council will strive to bring their educational attainment closer in line with those of their peers, enabling them to achieve the full potential.

The Council will ensure that:

- All looked after children receive appropriate full time education in a local mainstream school where possible and have access to the educational opportunities afforded to other children, including early years provision.
- Looked after children have continuity, both of placement and education.
- Prompt and positive action is taken to provide any additional intervention required to secure the above principles.

- The views of looked after children are taken into account in any decision that affects their lives.
- Appropriate training is provided for all staff involved in the education of looked after children.
- The achievements of looked after children are celebrated.
- Looked after children effectively access other Council services which will promote their educational achievement.

The Director of Children and Young People's Services will:-

- Take lead responsibility for achieving the best possible outcomes for Looked After Children
- Pay specific attention to improving the educational outcomes for Looked After Children.

And will ensure that:

- The education of looked after children is made a priority and key staff are identified to take strategic and operational responsibility for this.
- The Virtual School (previously the Looked After Children Education Service) in liaison with the child's social worker will lead on the development of a Personal Education Plan in partnership with the child or young person, designated teacher, parents and/or relevant family member, carer and other relevant person.
- Looked after young people over 16 have Pathway Plans which details their education and training needs and the support they will require to achieve them.
- Educational needs, attainments and plans are included in all reviews of looked after children and ensure that the appropriate completion of Personal Education Plans are monitored at each review.
- There is the continued involvement of birth families in their children's educational progress and achievement wherever possible.
- Looked after children are regularly consulted as a group about their educational experiences and needs.
- Social work staff and carers will participate fully in all educational activities, for example by attending parents' evening, SEN reviews and sports day.
- Appropriate input is made to all looked after reviews.
- An appropriate educational placement is made for all looked after children within twenty school days.
- Social workers will notify both schools and the Virtual School of any new admission into care or change of placement.
- Targets for looked after children identified in the Virtual School Business Plan are monitored and progress is reported annually to members through the Corporate Parenting Panel and CYPs Scrutiny.
- Formal protocols and joint working and planning arrangements are established to secure positive educational outcomes for looked after children.
- The performance of looked after children is regularly monitored.

- Joint targets and objectives that are both aspirational and achievable are set for the education of looked after children.
- Management information systems are maintained and developed in order that relevant information can be shared, used and monitored across services (whilst taking appropriate measures to maintain confidentiality).
- The Virtual School (previously the LACE Service) is funded to provide where necessary direct support to looked after children in their educational provision.

Schools will ensure that:-

- A designated teacher is in place to undertake the statutory role and responsibility for looked after children.
- All looked after children have a Personal Education Plan which is monitored regularly in school.
- They provide additional support to allow looked after children to access the curriculum effectively and to catch up on missed work if appropriate.
- They offer looked after children appropriate support within school, to protect them from bullying and intrusive questioning about their circumstances.
- They provide appropriate input (by attendance and/or written report) to all looked after children statutory reviews.
- They set appropriately challenging attainment targets for looked after children and monitor their progress towards them. The designated teacher should record and report regularly on all such progress.