



Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Young Carers Policy

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This policy should be interpreted in the context of other relevant College Policies and Procedures, particularly BCA Safeguarding Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (November 2019), BCA Safeguarding Annual Audit (December 2017) and the Single Equality Scheme (November 2019).

Purpose

Providing high quality education that gives our students the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful in their chosen career.

BCA Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010. The College is fully committed to promoting, maintaining and supporting equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. The College aims to create an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, and gain a feeling of self-esteem and respect for and from all others. The College expresses its opposition to all forms of inequality and discrimination.

Terminology

Looked After Child - LAC

Care Leaver - CL

Young Carer - YC

Designated Safeguarding Lead - DSL

Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead - SDSL

College Vision

The college aims to provide all learners with an equal opportunity, irrespective of gender, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, religion, marital status, age, disability, learning difficulties, sexual orientation or preference, unemployment, language, culture or social background, with a positive experience and to reach their full potential. The college vision for LAC/CL/YCs is to provide them with the necessary support and guidance to achieve an equal opportunity, so that they are able to achieve and progress to further/higher education and/or training as well as preparation for wider life experiences.

Line Management

The DSL has the responsibility for the day to day welfare of LAC/CL/YC. The DSL reports directly to the SDSL, who has a strategic role for overseeing all LAC/CL/YC students at the college. Both SDSL & DSL work closely to ensure the safeguarding of these individuals however neither has sole responsibility.

Legislation

This policy describes our approach to meeting the requirements set out in

- Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004
- Care Matters, Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 "A First Class Education") ·The Children and Young Person's Act 2008
- Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children)

Aims and Objectives

BCA recognise that entering care represents a significant change in a young person's life. At this stage the State takes on an immense responsibility for these young people by agreeing to undertake the parental role on a day to day basis. That means that all those working for the State at a local level in this college should demand no less for each child in care than they would for their own children.

- We will ensure that high quality learning opportunities and education are provided for all our students.

- We will ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all.

- We aim to support all students in achieving across the five outcome areas of Every Child Matters, whatever their background or circumstances.

- We recognise that LAC/CL/YC can be especially vulnerable and are sometimes 'at risk' of failure in the learning context.

Therefore with specific reference to this cohort of students we will strive to achieve the following aims:-

- To ensure all college policies and procedures are followed sensitively for this cohort of students.
- To ensure that these students have access to a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- To provide personalised learning and curriculum appropriate to needs and ability.
- To support and monitor social progress.
- To ensure that students in this category take as full a part as possible in all college activities and strive to reduce and eliminate any barriers that may stop them from taking part.
- To ensure that carers, social workers and parents (as appropriate) of these students are involved and kept fully informed of the student's progress and attainment.
- To ensure that wherever possible these students are involved in decisions affecting their learning, the plans for progress and future provision.
- To ensure that success is appropriately recognised and reinforced.
- To ensure that any emerging concerns are followed up in a timely way with skill and sensitivity (e.g. changes in patterns of behaviour and attendance).
- To liaise and cooperate with appropriate partners, in particular Social Care to ensure that all plans complement and support the promotion of the educational achievement and well-being of these students.

In order to provide LAC/CL/YCs with an equal opportunity, there is a need to identify them at the very earliest opportunity in order to provide them with a tailored experience from pre-entry guidance through to progression. Therefore the college aims to provide the following support to all LAC/CL/YCs:

- Ensure out-reach activities are accessible, e.g. taster days, open days and that costs are not a barrier to participation.
- Effectively publicise college support for potential LAC/CL/YCs and those colleagues in local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, etc. who are supporting them in their educational progression.
- The DSL will have a lead responsibility to act as a key point of contact and advisor for LAC/CL/YCs, to provide support prior to and on entry, as well as throughout the learning programme.
- Ensure early identification of applicants and establish contact with them as appropriate.
- Ensure information on the full range of support offered to LAC/CL/YCs is readily available and easily accessible (financial, welfare and academic).
- Offer identified personal support before the course starts i.e. transition and identify arrangements for any continuing support post enrolment if required.
- Where appropriate offer flexible application arrangements e.g. compact, interview guarantees, etc.
- Ensure that the individual's circumstances are reflected in the support offered and accommodated within processes related to application and other funding provision.
- Provide impartial progression guidance relating to further study or progression routes into employment.

Monitoring the Progress of Looked After Children

- We will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of LAC/CL.YP students at regular intervals.
- We will ensure that the college makes an assessment of the student's needs and attainment on entry, to ensure continuity of learning.

Attendance and Exclusion

- The college recognises that LAC/CL/YP are statistically much more likely to have a poor attendance record and are up to 5 times more likely to be excluded than their non-looked after peers.
- The college will take specific steps to monitor the attendance of these students and will notify all appropriate partners at an early stage if there is an indication that problems with attendance might occur.
- The college will take all reasonable steps to ensure that exclusion is rarely used for these students and then is always only as a last resort, after all other avenues have been explored.
- Ensure that should one of these students be identified as at risk of exclusion, then contact is made with the LA / Social, to enable early intervention / preventative strategies to be instigated.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- The DSL will co-ordinate record keeping for all LAC/CL/YP in college.
- Records will include individual learning plans, up to date progress and attainment records, PEP planning records and personalised information relating to care context as appropriate. These records will be maintained in a single place, having regard to the statutory nature of some of these documents and the confidential information that they contain.
- We will ensure there is ready access to information and up to date contact details for carers, parents (where appropriate), social worker and the named Social Care contact.
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving college/university promptly if there is a transfer to another educational establishment.
- Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of the college staff. We are guided by best practice and on the 'need to know'. Wherever possible students' wishes are taken into account in sharing information.
- The DSL will attend where possible or arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to the statutory LAC review process.

Partnership Working

- Our college values the views of carers and parents. We firmly believe in developing strong partnerships with carers, parents and residential care workers to enable students to achieve their potential.
- We will develop close relationships and collaborative work to promote the learning and well-being of individual students, both in and out of college.
- PEP meetings, other college liaison and consultation processes and informal day to day dialogue are all seen as good opportunities to enhance our partnerships.
- We recognise the essential contributions that external support services make in assisting LAC/CL/YP. We commit to developing positive partnerships with all involved.