


Oxfordshire Hospital School Looked after Children (LAC), Adopted (and formerly adopted) Children & Children under special Guardianship (SGO) Policy

Person responsible for Policy:	Angela Ransby
Date to Governors:	
Date Agreed:	
Review Due:	November 2018 (revised Feb 2018)
Is this Policy to appear on school website:	
Is this Policy to be displayed in Reception:	

Headteacher's Signature:	
Date: January 2018	
Signature of Chair of the Governors:	
Date:	

What does being a 'Looked After Child' mean?

For the purpose of school admissions, a looked-after child is a child who is (a) in the care of an English local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by such a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). (DfE, Feb 2018)

They might be living:

- with foster parents
- at home with their parents under the supervision of social services
- in residential children's homes
- other residential settings like schools or secure units

They might have been placed in care voluntarily by parents struggling to cope or, Children's Services may have intervened because a child was at significant risk of harm.

A child will stop being 'looked after' when they are either adopted, returned home or, turn 18. The local authority will continue to support children leaving care at 18 until they reach 21.

**At the OHS, inpatients at the Highfield are legally classified as being 'accommodated by the LA' for safeguarding and/or welfare reasons. While they are accommodated, the child's parents [or guardians] retain full parental responsibility and may at any time remove them from local authority provided accommodation and so will not be classified as Looked After Children.*

What is adoption?

Adoption is a permanent, legal arrangement in which parental responsibility for a child passes to their adoptive parents. It provides children who cannot be brought up by their birth family with a new home and family.

What is the definition of a previously looked after child?

A previously looked-after child is a child adopted from the care of an English local authority under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 or who, immediately after being looked after by an English local authority, became the subject of a special guardianship or child arrangements order and are still subject to such orders. (DfE, Feb 2018)

What is a special guardianship order (SGO)?

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced Special Guardianship as a means of providing children and young people with a permanent placement that does not end the legal relationship between the child and his/her birth parents. If appropriate, children under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) may continue to have links with their birth parents. Special Guardians can be members of the extended family or someone else deemed appropriate by the local authority. SGO is not as secure as adoption, but is intended to be a permanent placement.

These children and young people may struggle with:

SEN

Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are significantly more likely to have SEN than their peers. Of those with SEN, a significant proportion will have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC plans).

Mental Health

Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.

DfE, Statutory Guidance for Designated Teachers, February, 2018

Aim

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for these children and young people to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their full potential, both academically and personally.

Objectives

Looked After Children, Adopted (and previously adopted) Children and Children under a Special Guardianship Order in this school will:

- receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support

- have access to the full range of aspirational educational opportunities

The Designated Teacher:

- is the central point of initial contact within the school and helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
- has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child in school.
- ensures that staff at OHS work with home schools and VSH's to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- promotes a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- is aware of the SEN needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and ensures their identified SEN needs are being met.
- ensures OHS staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- promotes whole school practices and approaches to ensure that the voice of looked-after and previously looked-after children is heard.
- works with home schools and VSH's to ensure that Pupil premium Plus (PP+) approaches are continued wherever possible
- contributes to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures.
- ensures OHS staff work in collaboration with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their home schools, VSH, carers, parents or guardians.
- has lead responsibility for the monitoring of looked after children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary.
- works closely with the home school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- provide information to the Governing Body and LA as requested (and at least annually) about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils, adopted (and previously adopted) pupils and pupils under a Special Guardianship Order.

Participation in and co-ordination of review and planning meetings for Looked After Children, Adopted (and previously adopted) Children and Children under a Special Guardianship Order

The senior leadership team will do everything possible to enable appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the child or young person.

Reporting to Governors

The designated teacher will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of Looked After, Adopted (and previously adopted) and Under Special Guardianship Order pupils in the school throughout the academic year

- A comparison of progress for these children and young people, compared to those of other pupils (pupil indicators)
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils (OTS)

The named governor must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children, Adopted (and previously adopted) Children and Children under a Special Guardianship Order have equal access to the curriculum, statutory assessments, additional educational support, appropriate pastoral support and extra-curricular/curriculum enrichment activities.

The named Governor with special responsibility is: Julie Tridgell
The designated teacher is: Helen White

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' DfE, February 2018

Appendix 1: OHS Flowchart for Looked After Children, Adopted (and previously adopted) Children and Children under a Special Guardianship Order

Admission of the student to the OHS. Identification as Looked After Child, Adopted (and previously adopted) Child or Child under a Special Guardianship Order through ward handovers/home school contact/information from carers/MDT.

Admission flagged up to the OHS Leader of Learning who will become the consistent point of contact for the child or young person.

OHS Leader of Learning will seek information about the academic attainment and other issues affecting the newly admitted child or young person at an early stage to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan (PEP) or Education Plan for Adopted (and previously adopted) Children (EPAC) if in place.

Information about the circumstances of the child or young person will be shared on a need to know basis. Only teaching staff who are in direct contact with them will be informed. Any particular learning needs, behavioural issues or other relevant difficulties or strategies in place will be shared.

If the child or young person appears to be having difficulties with their learning or failing to engage, the OHS Leader of Learning will investigate all the possible contributory factors and talk to the student to identify any support needed.

The progress of every Looked After Child, Adopted (and previously adopted) Child and Child under a Special Guardianship Order will be discussed weekly at the Senior Leadership meeting. If progress is not as expected, well being and/or academic interventions will be identified. When required, professional agency involvement will be sought. If there are concerns around the lack of response or support from the home school, the OHS Designated Teacher will be asked to contact the Designated Teacher at the home school directly. Continued concerns will be raised with the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH).