

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS POLICY

1 Mission

1.1 'Realising student potential and achieving excellence'.

2 Context

This policy is written in the context of the College Corporate Strategy 2013-2016 and with particular reference to the College Strategy for Widening Participation and Equality and Diversity.

The context of this policy supports the following:-

2.1 Safeguarding Statement

The College recognises its responsibilities and duties under the Working Together to Safeguard Children 201 requirements, which defines safeguarding as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The College believes that safeguarding students is our paramount concern and therefore safeguarding issues take priority in relation to any other policies and/or procedures.

Adult Safeguarding statement

The College works in line with the Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding; Safeguarding Adults Principles to safeguard and prevent abuse of vulnerable adults.

- **Empowerment**- Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention**- It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality**- Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection**- Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership**- Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability**- Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

H&S Statement

- 2.2 Doncaster College recognises its responsibilities and duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to provide a healthy and safe working and learning environment so far as is reasonably practicable. This duty extends to cover employees, students, contractors, Visitors and members of the public and covers all its related activities and undertakings.

Equality & Diversity Statement

- 2.3 Doncaster College strives to promote an ethos and image that positively reflects its commitment to advancing equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity. The College does not tolerate any prejudicial behaviour by any member of its community and has a zero-tolerance policy to bullying, harassment and victimisation. Every step is taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations among all social groups. The College is committed to ensuring that it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly against individuals on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.

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- 2.4 To provide an integrated co-ordinated multi agency transition service for students in care/leaving care enabling them to access FE/HE in response to the “Care Matters: Time for Change” White Paper. Whilst the ‘Promoting the education of looked after children’ document is a guide for Local Authorities, Doncaster College has implemented key elements of this document into practice.

- 2.5 To respond to students or staff who present with personal, social, emotional, educational or professional concerns regarding Looked After Children and/or Care Leavers.

3 Purpose

- 3.1 The service provides a personal, and in the majority of circumstances, a confidential support service, which enables students to acknowledge and address any concerns which may interfere with studying, working and living a satisfactory life.
- 3.2 The overall aim of service is to provide an opportunity for those receiving support to work towards living in a more satisfying and resourceful way. The term ‘support’ includes work with individuals, pairs, or groups of Looked After Children/Care Leavers. The objectives of particular relationships will vary according to the young person’s needs.
- 3.3 Support may be concerned with issues affecting the educational potential of the young person, addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crises, developing personal insight and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict or improving relationships with others. The Youth Engagement Worker’s role is to facilitate work with the young person in ways which respect their values, personal resources and capacity for self-determination.

4 Scope

- 4.1 To contribute to key external statutory and non-statutory working groups/agencies including but not limited to the Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council 'Better Education for Children in Care' Group.

5 Responsibility

- 5.1 The Assistant Principal Learner Support and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring a review of the policy.
- 5.2 The Head of Staff and Student Welfare and Pastoral Support will ensure staff and students are appropriately supported, and ensure that the Youth Engagement Worker receives appropriate support.
- 5.3 The Youth Engagement Worker is responsible for delivering a confidential, ethical and professional service.
- 5.4 All College staff will ensure that Looked After/ Care Leaver students in need of support are appropriately referred to the Youth Engagement Worker.
- 5.5 The Deputy Principal Strategy and Resources is responsible for ensuring the Youth Engagement Worker receives appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

6 Monitoring, Review and Dissemination

- 6.1 The Service will be publicised in/at:
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council Children in Care Education Service
 - Doncaster Children's Services Trust 18+ Leaving Care Team
 - Accommodation providers for Care Leavers such as Future 19.
 - Partnership transition meeting
 - Open Days and the College application form
 - Student Handbook
 - Student Services
 - Induction
 - Staff Induction and training events
 - College Website
 - Fostering Newsletter
 - Relevant external agencies
- 6.2 The policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Staff and Student Welfare and Pastoral Support making use of feedback from users of the service, developments internally and externally, and the College self-assessment feedback process.

7 Policy

- 7.1 Looked After Children / Care Leavers are entitled to:
- an offer of an initial appointment within five working days of referral
 - in the event of an emergency, a response from the service during the same day
 - an opportunity to receive information, guidance and support in order to explore educational opportunities

- an offer of an agreed level of contact, with an opportunity to review, and where appropriate, re-negotiate support levels
- receive support in working appropriately with external agencies

7.2 Confidentiality

(a) Information regarding Looked After Children / Care Leavers students will be held confidentially by the Youth Engagement Worker and shared appropriately on a “need to know basis” and with the knowledge of the young person.

(b) Concerns relating to the safety of a young person would be addressed by reference to the College Safeguarding Children and Students Policy and Procedures.

(c) Personal records relating to Looked after Children and Care Leavers remain the property of the College and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet within the Youth Engagement Worker’s office.

Records will be retained for a period of seven years after which they will be destroyed via the College confidential waste disposal system.

Students are informed that they have a right to see the notes kept by the service. Requests will be considered in line with the College Data Protection policy.

(d) The Youth Engagement Worker will receive appropriate support from an appropriately qualified member of the College Welfare Team.

All matters of concern relating to confidentiality and ethical practice will be considered within the regular supervisory relationship.

(e) The Youth Engagement Worker will ensure that all staff have an understanding of confidentiality as it relates to Looked After Children Care Leavers accessing College.

8 The Role and Responsibility of the Youth Engagement Worker

The role of the Youth Engagement Worker is equal and equivalent to the role of the Designated Teacher in secondary education for Looked After Children / Care Leavers.

8.1 The Youth Engagement Worker will:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Particularly to those who are subject to the Inclusive Risk Assessment procedure.
- ensure a smooth transition and induction for the young person, and note specific requirements, including any additional needs.
- ensure that each Looked After / Care Leaver student has an identified member of staff that they can talk to – this may or may not be the Youth Engagement Worker
- co-ordinate support for the student in College and liaise with other internal and external professionals and carers
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible

- ensure that the Looked After / Care Leaver Students are informed about and encouraged to attend extra-curricular activities and participation activities
- ensure efficient transfer of information between individuals, relevant agencies and to other organisations as appropriate
- ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained, in accordance with the legal rights of Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- ensure that Looked After Children and Care Leavers have an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP) in accordance with the statutory guidance.
- ensure that the PEP supports the student to achieve high expected levels of progress for the relevant national curriculum key area.
- ensure Looked After Children and Care Leavers are encouraged to have high expectations of themselves and to achieve their full potential.
- ensure access to Financial Support, in particular the 16-19 Bursary.
- Rigorously monitor the attendance of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, and liaise with key employees as appropriate.
- offer a progression and outreach service to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.