

Looked After Children Procedures – Updated January 2017

PURPOSE: To give a clear guidance to all staff that instruct and support “Looked after Children and Care leavers”(LACs)

SCOPE: Looked after Children and Care Leavers on BRS Courses

RESPONSIBILITY: All staff with a pastoral or instructional remit

INTRODUCTION

“Early childhood can impact on the ability of any child to learn and form relationships with peers and adults.”

A child or young person who is fostered or has been adopted may present challenges, while at the BRS, as a consequence of their own traumatic early experiences and this guide is intended to help all staff understand and respond to those challenges.

Whilst it is true that not all fostered or adopted children/young people will experience difficulties at the BRS, some will. An adoptive mother, engaged in a web based dialogue on the subject, expressed the problem well:

“I once overheard a teacher describe my son as “the child from hell”. Yup, that’s him... that’s where he’s came from. He doesn’t live there anymore, but he’s still a bit singed.”

All children/young people who have been fostered or adopted will have experienced loss – loss of their birth family, possibly loss of one or many foster families, friends, previous schools etc. Many have been let down in the past by those that should have cared for or looked after them and as a result they may be unable to trust adults.

All LACs will have experienced grief, loss and trauma and many will have been neglected or abused. This may lead to different behaviours during instruction or while interacting with their peers. Certain situations, sights smells or sounds may trigger a reaction due to reminders of past trauma.

There are some areas/activities which may have the potential to cause anxiety or stress to LACs. Below are some examples, this list is not exhaustive:

Personal Safety Class: e.g. topics such as drug or alcohol abuse may serve as painful reminders. Adults in the trainee’s birth family may be or have been involved in such activity, which may have led to the trainee being brought into the care system in the first place.

Fitness Sessions: a trainee who may have been abused may be uncomfortable when required to remove clothing or come in close contact with others. This may also be a problem for instance when “legging up”.

Celebrations: significant times of year may be particularly difficult for LACs: Christmas or a birthday may remind a child/young person of their circumstances.

Please see attached appendix.

Good Practice for dealing with LACs

- LACs need to get the message “we want you here”
- Avoid threats of removal or exclusion, these will simply reinforce the LAC’s perceptions of being unworthy or unwanted. In times of stress it is better to have “time in” rather than “time out”. If they need to be removed from a lesson, try do so positively e.g. “let’s go see MR X”
- Listen to the young person, their behaviour as well as their words. Observe patterns of behaviour and record them. Learn the triggers.
- Set small achievable goals
- Use positive behavioural management approaches
- Reassure the trainee that you are there for them, whatever they are concerned/worried about
- Use praise often but keep it low key
- Liaise fully with parents/carers. They will know the triggers and have their own strategies to share with you
- **All LACs must have a care plan, of which the **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**(pre-school age -18 years) is an integral part.**
-

Pre arrival

- BRS safeguarding team will be notified of any LACs due to attend a course.
- LACs will be invited to the BRS with their support worker.
- Once a LAC is accepted for a course at the BRS they will have a PEP meeting organised with their social worker, foster parent/carer and a member of BRS staff.

- They will be shown the accommodation and safeguarding procedures explained
- If possible the LAC will be introduced to their yard instructor during this visit.
- All relevant staff will be briefed by safeguarding team
- Risk assessment will be carried out by safeguarding team
- Should the LAC have special educational needs(0-25 years), the BRS will contact the Looked After Children Support Services Virtual School Team for guidance: **Zwandahl@suffolk.gov.uk** or **Elle.Zwandahl@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk** or **Linda.Norris@suffolk.gov.uk** or **Linda.Norris@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk**

During stay at BRS

- The PEP will be reviewed when necessary and paperwork will be sent to social worker, Virtual School (if necessary) and the young person.
- On completion of residential part of course LAC's support workers will be invited to attend end of course celebration at BRS. This will depend on the wishes of the trainee.

In the Workplace

- Any further reviews will be made available to all stakeholder