



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PROCEDURES

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PURPOSE: To give clear guidance to all staff who 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 experience. This guide is intended to help all staff understand and respond to those challenges.

While it is true that not all fostered or adopted children/young people will experience difficulties, 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 come from. He doesn’t live there anymore, but he’s still a bit singed.” Anonymous.

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 who 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 when interacting with their peers. Certain situations, sights, smells or sounds may trigger a reaction by reminding them of past trauma.

There are some areas/activities which may have the potential to cause anxiety or stress to LACs. Below are some examples, but 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 may have been involved in such activity, which could 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 into 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.

Good Practice for dealing with LACs

- LACs need to receive and understand the message “we want you here.”
- Avoid threats of removal or exclusion as; 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.”
Try not to make it seem like a punishment more of a way to resolve the situation.
- 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 which may vary according to the lesson/instruction being delivered.
- Use positive behavioural-management approaches. (See Annex 1)
- 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 contact all future trainees' previous education providers for information held on individuals.
- When BRS safeguarding team are notified of any LACs due to attend a course, the relevant professionals will be contacted.
- LACs will be invited to the BRS with their support worker.
- A PEP meeting will be organised with their social worker, foster parent/carer and a member of BRS staff.
- They will be shown the accommodation and the safeguarding procedures will be explained
- If possible, the LAC will be introduced to their yard instructor during this visit.
- All relevant staff will be briefed by BRS safeguarding team
- Risk assessment will be carried out by BRS 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

Virtual School Contact:

- Email : virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01223 699883

During stay at BRS

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

In the Workplace

- Any further reviews will be made available to all relevant professionals such as support workers, social workers or the local virtual school (if involved).
- Parents, foster parents or carers may also be involved with the trainee's permission.
- BRS Workplace Instructor will be informed of any information that will aid the transition into the workplace for trainees. This may, if appropriate, be shared with the employer but only after seeking consent from trainee or parents if under 18.
- BRS Mentor will keep in regular contact with trainee



Annex 1

Examples of positive behavioural management approach:

Routines

Set clear routines for everything that is expected of trainees. Do not assume that trainees know the expectations for each lesson- they need to be shown what is expected during the lesson.

Silent Signals

Create silent signals to remind trainees to pay attention and remain focussed during lessons. These can be for the whole group or special signals can be established for particular trainees who may need extra support.

Proximity

By simply getting physically closer to a trainee it may be possible to get them to focus on the task in hand without using verbal instructions.

Quiet Corrections

Avoid using shame and intimidation, instead quietly and quickly let the trainee know what you would like them to do and the consequence they will receive if that expectation is not met.

Take a break

Trainees may benefit from a short break (3-5 minutes) to reset and get focussed. This can be done either during an activity or before transitioning to a new task.

Positive Phrasing:

Focus on positive results of behaviour rather than the negative. Avoid using threatening statements that say: "If you don't.....I will...."

Rules can be positively phrased, for example, instead of "Don't run in the corridor" the rule can be " We walk in the corridor."

State the behaviour you want to see

Positively state the behaviour you want to see and acknowledge trainees who meet these expectations quickly. This not only rewards positive behaviour but repeats the expectation for trainees who may not have heard the first time. By stating the behaviour of 1 or 2 trainees was correct, the others may mimic their behaviour.

Tangible Reinforcers

Rewards are an effective way to encourage positive behaviour but clear guidelines should be set for how to earn rewards.