



Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

Reviewed September 2024

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Mrs Andrea Commins

Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children: Di Wise

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all pupils at our Academy based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children in care under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” and associated guidance on the education of children in care, including The Children and Families Act, 2014.

Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of LAC have suffered a disrupted childhood and experienced adverse events. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under-achievement when compared to their peers and are at greater risk of exclusion. LAC often achieve poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer Looked After Children progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Looked After Children are those in public care and either:

- Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order, living either at home or away from home
- Accommodated with friends or relatives, foster carer or residential homes, parents may retain full responsibility
- Remanded into care

All these groups are said to be “Looked After Children” (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours. Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence of their status.

However, within the Academy, pupils who do not have a current Social Worker, will be referred to Post-LAC (P-LAC).

A private agreement is not public care e.g. when a child lives with friends or relatives by private arrangement and these children are not designated as Looked After. However, children living in these informal arrangements may be vulnerable.

Children stop being ‘looked after’ when they are either adopted, returned home, except when they remain under a care order, or turn 18.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND CARE WORKERS

At our Academy we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. There will be regular, planned review meetings to enable this partnership to work.

PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS

Schools can receive Pupil Premium Plus funding for P-LAC who left local authority care because of the following:

- adopted from care on or after 30 December 2005 or who left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO),
- child arrangements orders
- residence orders

Children who are currently in care (LAC children) will also receive this funding and may also receive additional funding from the Head of the Virtual School in their Local Authority, this being the Local Authority they were educated in at the time of their becoming looked after. This is not their current Local Authority.

This school is committed to using this funding to support accelerated progress, in order to narrow the gap and improve outcomes for Looked After and post-LAC Looked After children.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body will:

- Identify a nominated Governor for LAC.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support the needs of LAC.
- Ensure that the Academy has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head Teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC are recognised and met.

The Head Teacher will:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC, whose role is set out below.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC and take action where attainment, behaviour or attendance is causing concern.
- Report to the full governing body annually on the attainment, behaviour and attendance of LAC.
- Ensure that the staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Develop a strategy for LAC.
- Be the named contact for colleagues and carers within the school community and for colleagues in children's services including social services, education and health.
- Keep an up to date list of LAC/P-LAC in school and clearly establish who has parental responsibility.
- Advocate on behalf of LAC/P-LAC with particular regard to issues such as school trips, fixed term exclusions, flexibility of procedures and communicating high expectations for LAC with both staff and the pupils themselves.
- Develop knowledge of legislation relating to LAC and of Children's Services procedures through a variety of ways including attending multi-agency training.
- Attend relevant training.
- Inform staff and governors about up to date training.
- Be aware that the specific needs of LAC/P-LAC should be communicated sensitively to appropriate staff – teaching and non-teaching.

- Liaise closely with the Pupil Premium Lead regarding the spending of Pupil Premium Plus (LAC and P-LAC). Ensure Pupil Premium tracker is kept and updated regularly, recording how we are spending the funding for maximum impact.
- Be aware that LAC, should have an up to date, quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) or Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP). Note: It is the Social Worker's responsibility to initiate this.
- Where applicable, support the pupil in making a contribution to the PEP.
- Where applicable and in conjunction with social workers, arrange education planning meetings for new admissions to school.
- Where applicable, liaise with the pupil's social worker, the school's Designated Governor and other relevant outside professionals.
- Advise on systems, including recording of progress, to be put in place to support attendance and achievement.
- Promote the involvement of LAC/P-LAC in school clubs and extra curricular activities.
- Liaise with other designated teachers at transition times such as moving key stages or to a new school.

All staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC/P-LAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's/P-LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC/P-LAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC/P-LAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC/PLAC.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC say they are bullied, so work to prevent bullying in line with the Academy's Policy on Anti Bullying.

LINKS WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS/AGENCIES

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting children in care. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual children in care:

- Virtual School Staff and LACES (Looked After Children Education Service) team
- Children's Social Care Fieldwork Teams
- Educational psychologists and other professionals from Special Educational Needs services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service
- Life Chances Team