



Looked After Children

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Definition

“Looked-after children (LAC)” are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children’s residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

“Previously LAC (PLAC)” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Context and Principles

Ravenscroft Primary School acknowledges that we have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

Ravenscroft Primary School’s approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Promoting attendance
- Early intervention and priority action
- Targeting support
- Minimising exclusions
- Achieving continuity and promoting stability
- Listening to children
- Promoting a wider learning experience
- Promoting health and well being
- Working in Partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

Roles and Responsibilities

The **virtual school head (VSH)** is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority’s LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.



- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for LAC.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
 - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's personal education plan (PEP).
 - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
 - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
 - Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a designated teacher for looked after children and that they are enabled and supported, along with the Head Teacher and other staff, to carry out their responsibilities
- Ensuring that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensuring that governors are aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring the school has an overview of the needs of all its Looked After Children regardless of the originating authority.
- Allocating resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Working to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring that the school implements policies, practices and procedures that enable Looked After Children to achieve and enjoy their time at the school.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.



- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan that transition with the child's social worker.
- Ensuring the PEP is completed with child, their social worker (if applicable), carer and other relevant people before the statutory reviews.
- Ensuring that each looked after child has an identified member of staff they can talk to: this need not be the Designated Teacher, as it will be based on the child's own situation and wishes.
- Tracking academic and other progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinating any support for Looked After Children that is necessary within the school and from outside.
- Ensuring confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Facilitating and encouraging Looked After Children to join extra-curricular activities and maximise out of school learning opportunities e.g. 'gifted and talented' projects.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Acting as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as needs of Looked After Children.
- Setting up timely meetings with relevant parties, where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or at risk of exclusion.
- Ensuring the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and where appropriate between schools.
- Being pro-active in supporting transitions and planning when moving to a new phase in their education.
- Promoting inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Maintaining good communication with Newham's Virtual School and Children's Social Care and ensure all required information is collated and sent when necessary.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children achieve stability, positive self esteem and success within the school.
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children: e.g. emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation

Personal education plan (PEP)

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The PEP will be reviewed termly.



The school, with other professionals and the child's carers, will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or PLAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment. Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

Working with agencies and the virtual school head (VSH)

- The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- The school will coordinate their review meetings
- The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and PLAC.
- Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- PP+ for PLAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or PLAC, and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.
- The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.
- The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and PLAC.

Safeguarding

- The school recognises that many LAC and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.
- All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.
- Where a LAC or PLAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.



- The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.
- Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a LAC or PLAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

Pupil mental health

- LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and PLAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with LAC or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.
- The school's senior mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC and previously-LAC, and will always either be a member of, or be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO, or DSL.

Suspension and exclusion

- Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy and Suspension and Exclusion Policy.
- The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance '[Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#)' and recognises that suspending or excluding LAC can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides. The headteacher will balance this recognition alongside the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all staff and pupils, devising strategies that take both into consideration.
- Where the school has concerns about a LAC's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.
- As part of the termly review of a pupil's PEP, any concerns about their behaviour will be recorded, alongside information on how they are being supported to improve this and reduce the likelihood of exclusion.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.
- Where a LAC is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible. The VSH will work with the designated teacher and other relevant individuals to consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the pupil's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.
- The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.



Pupils with SEND

- Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.
- The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.
- The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that LAC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy takes account of all related legislation and guidance including:

- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities DfE February 2018
- Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities DfE February 2018
- Children's attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care NICE Guidelines Nov 2015
- Children Act 1989
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'