



LAC & PLAC Policy

All school policies embody the commitment of Governors and Staff to the principles of:

- Equality of opportunity,
- Student and staff wellbeing, both mental and physical
- Striving for excellence in all that we do
- Transparency and accountability

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY September 2021

Assistant Headteacher – C.McAleavy

Policy for the Education of Looked After Children

Leasowes is committed to providing a high-quality education for all students including LAC or Children in Care (CIC) as renamed by some Local Authorities. We recognise that more vulnerable students, including LAC may need access to additional support, mentoring and advocacy to enable equality of access, opportunity and success. We are committed to providing an inclusive ethos in an atmosphere of mutual respect, where all students' needs are identified, understood and responded to sensitively and effectively.

Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school or care placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.
- Difficulties in sustaining relationships with others

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- Underachievement in further and higher education.
- Lack of interest or aspirations

These issues may also affect adopted young people

Who are Looked After Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21)
- The term “in care” refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are “accommodated” by

the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s home or in a residential school. 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.

Personal Education Plan (PEPs)

Personal Education Plans for LAC are statutory planning meetings which should occur within 20 school days of a child becoming looked after and be reviewed each term. PEPs are significant vehicles for celebrating the achievements of young people and effecting change. PEPs can be recorded electronically (e-PEP) so that they can be accessed by all relevant stakeholders online. This is a secure process which only the Designated teacher, delegated Social worker and the Looked After Children Education Services, Virtual School can access. The PEP states what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. Education targets and strategies produced through the PEP should be shared with relevant teaching staff. This is especially important if issues have arisen regarding classwork, homework or behaviour in certain lessons.

The young person should be involved in the PEP, their voice is important and is shared at the PEP. Where a young person does not wish to attend, the meeting should nevertheless take place, and they should be encouraged to comment on their education and progress through the relevant section of the PEP.

Pupil Premium Plus

Additional funding for LAC is granted to schools to help target barriers to learning and close the attainment gap between students. This grant is managed by the Virtual School and used to improve outcomes and “narrow the gap” as identified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the Designated Teacher for the school. How the funding is spent will be discussed during the child’s Personal Education Planning meeting but must be used efficiently and effectively. The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this funding to support one-to-one tuition, extra-curricular activities (including financial support for school trips), revision guides for KS4 pupils and individualised needs (as assessed through the PEP). Accurate records of pupil premium expenditure are maintained by the Finance Manager.

Role and responsibility of LAC Designated Teacher

Ms Claire McAleavy, Assistant Headteacher is the Designated teacher for Looked After Children, she should:

- Keep and update a list of LAC students in the school (ongoing)

- Ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the student and carer, and note any specific requirements, including Special Educational Needs and care status
- Ensure that all LAC who have an identified delay/gap in their learning due to significant periods of absence from school have their needs met at the earliest opportunity (SENCO involvement)
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEND. Make EHCP requests and carry out EHCP reviews, as appropriate
- Ensure that each term a Personal Educational Plan (PEP) or e-PEP is produced in conjunction with the social worker, carer, student and appropriate stakeholders
- Allocate the 'Pupil Premium' per term, ensure the student is given every opportunity and support with this funding. Record details on the PEP/e-PEP
- Keep PEPs/e-PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings (maybe 3 or 6 monthly intervals or as need arises)
- Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the student's wishes and may not necessarily be Ms McAleavy, the Designated Teacher)
- Co-ordinate support and information sharing for the student within school and liaise other professionals, including the Educational Support Service and carers as necessary
- Identify how the Pastoral Team can support LAC, through additional CPD on trauma, loss and separation
- Maintain an overview of changing needs and progress of LAC
- Be an advocate for LAC
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC.
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events.
- Actively encourage and promote one-to-one tuition and extra-curricular activities for LAC.
- Liaise with relevant staff to review the progress of LAC through intervention or withdrawal sessions
- Inform/meet with Educational Support Service and other relevant agencies where there are concerns regarding progress, attendance, exclusions or other difficulties
- Ensure staff receive relevant information
- Ensure confidentiality for individual students and only share personal information on a need to know basis
- When a LAC is involved in a planned move to another school, ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, relevant agencies and receiving school, including updating the PEP/e-PEP
- Encourage LAC to attend and express their views at the LAC and PEP reviews
- Attend designated LAC Coordinators Network and Training Sessions
- Celebrate the success of LAC – complete the annual nominations for LAC Celebration Evening (May/June) and attend the Celebration Evening (October) each year or send a representative from the school

- Contribute to the school planning for LAC through the School Improvement Plan
- Ensure weekly attendance returns to each of the Welfare call providers engaged by Virtual Schools
- Make early contact with parents/carers/Social worker over attendance and punctuality
- Support Carers in helping their LAC at home
- Report to Governors each term with updates on academic progress, attendance and behaviour

Roles and responsibilities of all staff

- Ensure that any student in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the Guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for written or verbal information, including information on educational attainment and general well-being to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings and attend LAC reviews and Core Group Meeting reviews as appropriate
- Respond positively to a LAC's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary
- Be sensitive to a LAC's background and the issues surrounding being "Looked After" when addressing certain curriculum areas/research topics e.g. family trees, Mother's Day, inviting parents/carers to Parents Evening and similar areas
- Provide a supportive, emotionally intelligent climate to enable a LAC to achieve stability within the school setting
- As with all students, have high aspirations and expectations for the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children
- Positively promote the self-esteem of LAC
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure LAC participate in school's Gifted and Talented programme where appropriate
- Keep Ms McAleavy informed of any concerns, underachievement, identified barriers to learning to be included as part of the PEP review or to initiate a discussion with carers/parents/outside agencies

Roles and responsibilities of the Governing body

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils 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 looked after children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (November 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC.

The Designated Governor is Mrs Jan Lees

The governing body at Leasowes High School will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for LAC
- Ensure that there is a named Designated teacher for LAC with sufficient time to discharge this role
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of LAC are met
- Be aware of how many children are designated as Looked After, their ages and any additional needs they might have
- Ensure all LAC have a PEP/e-PEP and IEP where appropriate, with appropriate targets, monitoring and evaluation of progress, attendance and behaviour
- Continue the policy of not excluding any student (especially a LAC) until all support and advisory channels have been exhausted
- Ensure that all LAC take part in trips, activities and over-night visits alongside their peers, making additional provision where necessary to ensure their participation
- Nominate a governor who links with the designated teacher, receives regular reports which provides feedback to the governing body

Previously Looked After Children -Post LAC

What is a Previously Looked after Child?

Previously Looked After Children are those who:

- Are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangement order.
- Were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

Children where the care order has been revoked and who have returned home to live with parents post LAC are not classed as Post LAC. Only children who were looked after and have been either adopted or placed under Special Guardianship, Residence or Child Arrangements Orders are defined as post LAC.

Children who are electively home educated, are educated in private schools (when the local authority does not pay the fees) or are post-16 students are currently not eligible for post LAC Pupil Premium.

2018-19 Previously Looked After Children Guidance Notes

Previously Looked After Children should be able to discuss difficult issues with a sympathetic and empathetic adult; discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their own views taken seriously and supported to take responsibility for their own learning; encouraged to participate in school activities and ultimately believe they can succeed and reach their aspirations.

In February 2018 the Department for Education issued two new statutory guidance documents:

- Promoting the Education Of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. 2018 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

These documents describe the requirements for the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, the support available via Virtual Schools and Post-LAC Pupil Premium.

The statutory guidance recognises a Previously Looked After Child as one who has left Care through one of the following routes:

- Subject to an Adoption Order
- Special Guardianship Order
- Child Arrangement Order (specific to residency-living with)

Previously Looked After Children (Post LAC) have additional needs that impact upon their education including emotional impact of experiences, disrupted learning, missed schooling and Special Education Needs; attainment data shows that these learners do not perform as well as their peers.

Maintained schools and academies should designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of Post LAC, ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training and raise understanding across the whole school staff.

Whilst lead responsibility for raising attainment of Post LAC rests with the DT, not all aspects of the DT role need to be carried out by a single individual or by a qualified teacher.

Education settings will need to give consideration to the DT's professional experience to provide leadership, provide training opportunities and time away from timetable commitments.

Governing bodies hold the school to account on how it supports P-LAC. Appropriate monitoring arrangements will need to be established and a flexible approach regarding reporting will need to be developed.

DT for Previously Looked After Children - Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will: -

- Be the initial point of contact and take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand things which affect how P-LAC pupils learn and achieve.
- Have high expectations and set targets, be attachment aware (especially around relationship building), see children as individuals and show sensitivity regarding situations
- Demonstrate understanding of the importance of involving YP's parents / guardians in decisions regarding their child's education, including use of Post LAC Pupil Premium if eligible.
- Contribute to a deeper understanding of everyone in school and inform management of resource implications.

- Be the lead member of staff for liaising with other professionals with outside agencies regarding P-LAC.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that P-LAC pupils are not placed at a disadvantage.
- Support P-LAC pupils by providing an effective induction for students starting school and support transitions.
- Develop sensitive methods of gathering accurate information regarding Previously Looked After children, including eligibility for Post LAC Pupil Premium.
- Promote good home-school links and establish a working relationship with the Previously Looked After Child's family, including helping them to understand value of interventions, raise awareness of how school teaches key skills and encourages high aspirations for P-LAC pupils.
- Be a source of advice regarding differential teaching strategies including use of assessment for learning approaches to improve progress and help in identification of knowledge gaps and how to address the gaps, ensuring staff have strong awareness, training and skills around the specific needs to P-LAC and how to support them.
- Seek advice regarding meeting the needs of individual P-LAC (including avoiding exclusion) with the agreement of the person who holds PR.
- Establish a good working relationship with the Virtual School worker allocated to their setting.

Eligibility and Use of Post LAC Pupil Premium

Children who have left Care and are now subject to an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order are eligible for Post-LAC Pupil Premium. These are collectively referred to as Post-LAC in these conditions of grant: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2018-to-2019/pupil-premium-2018-to-2019-conditions-of-grant>.

Children who ceased to be Looked After, and returned to the care of their parent, but are not on an Order are not eligible for Post-LAC Pupil Premium.

DTs may use school newsletters and websites to raise awareness of Post LAC Pupil Premium and eligibility. DTs will want to satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support by asking the child's parents for evidence of their previously LAC status. The parent or guardian should provide evidence of the Adoption Certificate, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order documentation provided by the court. If proof cannot be provided, DTs

will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, DTs can discuss eligibility with the Virtual School to agree a consistent approach.

Post-LAC Pupil Premium is paid to schools alongside, and under the same conditions as, FSM ever6 and Children of Service Personnel Premium. Post LAC Pupil Premium is for Reception to Y11 Pupils for those in LA, Maintained & Academy settings; £2,300 is paid directly to the schools using the declared data collected within the January school census, paid by instalments at quarterly intervals. Unlike the Pupil Premium Plus for LAC, that is managed by the Virtual School, Pupil Premium funding for post-LAC comes directly to the school and is not ring-fenced for the individual child. This means it is not a personal budget for individual children; however, schools may choose to allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

It is, however, good practice for schools to include parents in discussions around the most effective use of Pupil Premium Plus and important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence based and in the best interests of the child. Parents and guardians should be included in discussions regarding the child's needs and possible strategies to support their child.

In the case of parents/guardians not wanting to declare their child is a post-LAC but the school has verifiable evidence of the child's status, the school has a right to declare the child's status on their census without the consent of parents as the Census is a statutory document. However, from a moral viewpoint, the school may wish to discuss with the parent/guardian why they do not wish the child to be identified. For example, the parents/guardians may be worried that the child's status will be disclosed to others and/or the child will be singled out as a result of the school receiving PP+.

Other important information

Dudley School Admissions ask whether a child is LAC or post LAC and both groups are given priority for school places.

Dudley Virtual School have no responsibility over how Post LAC Pupil Premium is spent by schools and settings. Parents and guardians are welcome to contact Dudley Virtual School if they wish to seek advice or further information on this. A referral form is available in the Virtual School information sheet on Post LAC children.