

GREENHEART

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP 

The Orchards Primary Academy

Guidance for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

Effective from: May 2025

Review Date: May 2026

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Definition of Looked After Children (LAC)

- Legal definitions as per the Children Act 1989.
- Distinction between:
 - Looked After Children (in care of Local Authority)

Looked After Children (LAC) or Children in Care (CiC) refers to a child 'looked-after by a local authority' as outlined by section 22 Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

LAC/CiC are children who are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours and include children who are:

- living with foster parents/carers
- living in a residential children's home or
- living in residential settings like schools or secure units

1.2 Purpose of the Policy

- To set out the school's responsibilities and commitments
- To promote high expectations and positive educational outcomes for LAC
- To establish how the school will work in partnership with carers, social workers

Many LAC (Looked After Children) will have experienced disrupted schooling and gaps in learning. In addition, a significant proportion of LAC have some form of Special Educational Need and or have been excluded from school. This has resulted in the attainment of this group not being in line with the attainment of their peers nationally. At The Orchards Primary Academy, we will address this by:

- providing a safe environment for all LAC, where their educational experience is valued, high aspirations are encouraged and belief in the potential of all children is held.
- Ensuring that all LAC are provided with, and have access to, support to enable them to have every opportunity to enjoy, learn and achieve in line with their peers.
- Ensuring that our policies and procedures for LAC meet the requirements outlined within 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children, Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, DfE February 2018.'

2. Legal and Policy Context

2.1 Statutory Guidance and Legislation

- *Children Act 1989 & 2004*
- *Education Act 2002*
- *Children and Families Act 2014*
- *The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009*
- *Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (DfE, 2018)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)*

3. School Responsibilities

3.1 Commitment to Equality and Inclusion

- No child should be disadvantaged.
- LAC are entitled to additional academic, emotional, and social support.

3.2 High Aspirations and Targeted Support

- Setting high expectations.
- Use of individualised support plans and evidence-based interventions.

3.3 The Governors

The named Governor will ensure that:

- The needs of LAC are considered, reflected and supported within all relevant school policies.
- Governors and Senior Leadership are aware of the legal responsibilities and guidance in regards to LAC in education.
- Our admissions practices continue to give LAC the highest priority admission to the school, as outlined within 'School Admissions' DfE guidance 2014.
- The annual LAC monitoring report is scrutinised to ensure that the academic progress of LAC is effectively being tracked and challenged, and that staff have the training and resources needed to support this group of children.
- PP and PP+ spending is scrutinised ensuring that is used appropriately and effectively.
- Resources are available to address the needs specific to LAC, and that disparity in academic progress in comparison to their peers within school, including patterns in attendance and exclusion and provision for gifted and talented children are highlighted and swiftly addressed.

- An appropriate member of staff is appointed as Designated Teacher, who has access to training and resources (including time) to undertake their responsibilities to meet and champion the needs of LAC throughout the school.
- All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC.

3.4 The Headteacher

Is responsible for ensuring that:

- The role of the Designated Teacher (DT) is filled by an appropriate member of staff at all times (including arrangements to allow for staff absences and resignation). The DT should have the seniority to work with Senior Leadership, Governors and all staff to provide information, advice and champion the achievement and needs of LAC.
- The DT is provided with the time to fulfil their role and completes the LA Statutory Designated Teacher Training every two years as well as any other training to assist with the fulfilment of their duties.
- Policies and procedures to monitor and address the needs of, and support for LAC are in place and adhered to, with reference to academic progress, admissions, attendance, safeguarding and exclusions, and that swift action is taken when concerns arise.
- The curriculum delivered reflects the needs of children with attachment and trauma needs. The Orchards Primary Academy reports on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children to Governors, the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Local Authority as required.
- All school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities in regards to LAC as detailed within this policy and related guidance.
- All staff are aware of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups and their propensity towards being both the victims and perpetrator of Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse.
- The exclusion of LAC is avoided, alternatives to exclusion are considered and additional support is put in place to support those children at risk of exclusion.
- An Anti bullying Policy is in place and stringently followed which recognises that a significant proportion of LAC have experienced bullying at some point.

3.5 All staff

- Have high expectations in regard to the achievement of LAC
- Ensure that the individual needs of LAC are met through quality first teaching.
- Are aware that LAC have high rates of SEND and flag concerns regarding learning with the SENCO and DT.
- Are aware of the specific needs of LAC in relation to Attachment and Trauma and make appropriate adjustments to teaching and classroom management to meet these needs.

- Are aware of the prevalence of LAC mental health needs, and flag concerns to the DT and Mental Health Lead.
- Work proactively with the DT to ensure that LAC meet their targets and achieve. Ensuring that any barriers to learning, and inclusion are highlighted at the earliest opportunity.
- Work to ensure the Inclusion of LAC within the School community, maintaining their confidentiality while also providing support with raising their self-esteem, and supporting their relationships with peers in line with the Anti Bullying policy.

4. The Role of the Designated Teacher

4.1 Appointment

- All schools must appoint a suitably qualified and experienced teacher to fulfil this role, as per The Designated Teacher Regulations (2009). Mrs Beverley Walker-Gordon (Headteacher) has been appointed as The Designated Teacher.

4.2 Key Responsibilities

- Monitor academic progress and personal wellbeing.
- Lead on the development and implementation of Personal Education Plans (PEPs).
- Ensure school staff understand the needs and barriers facing LAC.
- Act as the main point of contact between the school and relevant external agencies (social workers, carers, Virtual School Head).
- Coordinating support for LAC in school and providing information, advice and training for staff and governors to raise awareness of their needs e.g. mental health.
- Being the first point of contact for the Local Authority, LAC, their carers and associated professionals, ensuring that a member of staff represents the school at all relevant meetings.
- Ensuring that all staff are trained on Trauma & Attachment.
- Liaising with Social Workers, Carers and other relevant professionals when LAC are experiencing difficulties and/or at risk of exclusion, arranging meetings to share concerns and plan interventions.
- Ensuring that all LAC (and their carers) have an identified member of staff that they can approach in school.
- Monitoring the progress of LAC throughout the school year culminating in an annual progress report to Governors.

- Coordinating and planning smooth LAC educational transitions, including starting school, changing Key Stage etc keeping in mind their needs.
- Swiftly identifying possible learning needs, safeguarding and mental health concerns to the Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health Lead and SENCO where appropriate and jointly planning interventions to address these concerns.
- Encouraging LAC to take part in extracurricular activities and trips, and removing any hidden barriers to their involvement.
- Ensuring instances of bullying affecting LAC is acted upon swiftly and that appropriate support is put in place.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of LAC, sharing personal information on a need to know basis only.
- The SENCO is aware of those LAC children in school, works closely with the DT and prioritises their access to additional support both internally and externally (including EP assessment).
- Making sure that LAC automatically receive their 'vulnerable group Bursary' and that it is allocated appropriately.
- PEP's (Personal Education Plans) ° Ensuring that PEP's for LAC are accurate, effective, relevant and completed within the identified timescales with the child, social worker, carers and any other relevant professionals. ° PEP's for LAC children with EHCP's complement rather than mirror the EHCP. ° Advising relevant staff of PEP targets, making sure that staff work with children to meet their targets. ° Ensuring that the Pupil Premium for LAC is used appropriately to support the child in meeting targets outlined within the PEP.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

5.1 Statutory Requirement

- Every LAC must have a current and high-quality PEP from the age of 3.

5.2 PEP Meeting Arrangements

- Held termly
- Attended by Designated Teacher, social worker and carer

5.3 Content of the PEP

- Academic progress and efforts
- Attendance data

- Targets and planned interventions
- Use of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Extra-curricular involvement and wider outcomes

6. Use of Pupil Premium Grant

6.1 Funding Overview

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

Pupil Premium Grant for LAC is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that children meet the targets outlined within their PEP. It can be used to support:

- Academic achievement and progress.
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented.
- Attendance.
- Inclusion [by reducing internal and external exclusion].
- Social skills.
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider.

Where further funding is needed for support, advice from the Virtual School will be sought.

6.2 Accountability and Oversight

- Spending must be evidenced through impact analysis and PEP documentation.

7. Admissions, Attendance and Exclusions

Admissions (See Admissions Policy and Arrangements for detail)

The Orchards Primary Academy acknowledges and ensures that LAC are given priority for School Admissions as outlined in DFE School Admissions Code Guidance 2014 (updated March 2022). We work collaboratively regarding any concerns that we might have in relation to the admission of LAC & PLAC. The Designated Teacher attends LAC admissions meetings and works closely alongside the Social Worker, Carers and any other professionals to ensure that children feel supported, and have a successful smooth transition into school life.

Attendance (See Attendance Policy for detail)

The attendance of LAC is carefully monitored and reported daily to Welfare / the Local Authority. Parents and Carers of LAC will be contacted regarding unauthorised absences daily. Concerns regarding attendance including identified patterns of absence will be raised with parents, carers, social workers and professionals.

Exclusions

LAC have disproportionately high levels of exclusions from schools nationally, placing them at a further educational disadvantage. In line with Local Authority and DfE Guidance, The Orchards Primary Academy do not permanently exclude LAC. In addition, we work closely with the Local Authority to avoid the fixed term exclusion of both groups. Advice and support from the Local Authority will be sought where it is felt that a LAC may become at risk of exclusion.

Support and alternatives to exclusion will be considered. Alternatives to exclusion may include:

- Internal exclusions
- Restorative Justice
- Managed Moves
- CAMHs support
- Additional therapeutic intervention

Where a fixed term exclusion of a LAC is unavoidable, parents/carers will be contacted prior to the child leaving the school site and work will be provided to avoid further gaps in education. Plans and support will be put in place to avoid further exclusion on the child's return to school.

8. Inclusion - (See SEND Policy and SEND Information Report for detail)

LAC are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life. Through effective communication with carers, professionals and staff, as well as the appropriate use of pupil premium and the PPG, we work to remove the barriers to LAC having a robust, enjoyable and valuable school experience.

The experiences of LAC has resulted in disproportionate levels of Special Educational Needs within these groups. In acknowledgement of this, individual attainment is monitored closely by the Designated Teacher via the PEP process and concerns highlighted to the SENCO. Concerns raised by Parents, Carers, Social Workers are welcomed and swiftly acted upon. Where it is felt that further assessment may be needed, LAC access to the SEND assessment process and interventions are prioritised.

A significant proportion of LAC have undiagnosed Speech and Language needs which impacts on educational outcomes. In recognition of this, all LAC (with the consent of parents & carers) are screened on entry for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. Significant or continuing concerns are referred to specialist support.