



Looked after children policy

Primary and Secondary Academies

March 2024

Definitions and overview

As outlined by Section 22 Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014): -

Looked After Children (LAC) or Children in Care (CiC)

This refers to a child “looked-after by a local authority” and are in their care for more than 24 hours.

It includes children who are living: -

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

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

This refers to children who are “no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any persons, or has been adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales,”

Additional information about PLAC

The experiences and outcomes of PLAC can be very similar to those of LAC. PLAC educational needs are unlikely to have changed just because their care status has. To address this, the needs of LAC and PLAC are prioritised and addressed in a similar way.

The progress of PLAC pupils is reviewed termly and we work proactively with parents, carers and other professionals to address any areas of concern and put in place support as appropriate.

Parents and Carers of PLAC are encouraged to identify their child’s previously looked after status on entry to the school and are required to produce documentation to support this. All parents are written to annually to request that they make us aware of their child’s PLAC status. All information is treated confidentially.

LAC & PLAC pupils receive a similar level of support from the school. The attainment of PLAC pupils is monitored on a termly basis by the Designated Teacher and funding for additional support (over and above the support available for any other pupil) is funded by the annual PP+ as outlined within our NSCT TRUST ‘[Pupil Premium Strategy Statement](#)’ which can be found on our website.

Any concerns regarding the progress of PLAC pupils are highlighted to parents, carers and (with parental consent) the Previously Looked After Education Officer at the Virtual School in a timely

fashion so that support can be put in place swiftly. Parents / Guardians are directed to the Adoption Fund via Local Authority Social Work assessment where necessary.

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

A termly pupil premium grant is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that pupils meet the targets outlined within their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

For Looked After Children, pupil premium is 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 suspensions wherever possible).
- social skills.
- transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider.

In instances where further funding is needed for support, advice from the [Local Authority's Virtual School](#) will be sought.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

Since 1st April 2023 pupil premium eligibility for pupils who have been adopted from care or have left care **includes children adopted from state care or equivalent from outside England and Wales**. While the PP+ for PLAC is not a 'personal budget,' should a PLAC require support over and above that which is provided for any other pupil, the PP+ can be used to fund this.

PP+ for PLAC is also 'pooled' and used to provide additional support and services to raise the attainment of the PLAC cohort within school. This is further outlined in our '[Pupil Premium Strategy Statement](#)' which can be found on our website.

Enfield Heights	www.enfieldheightsacademy.org.uk/pupil-premium-statement
Heron Hall	www.heronhallacademy.org.uk/pupil-premium-statement
Kingfisher Hall	www.kingfisherhallacademy.org.uk/pupil-premium-statement
Woodpecker Hall	www.kingfisherhallacademy.org.uk/pupil-premium-statement

Trauma-informed practice

Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as harmful or life threatening. While unique to the individual, generally the experience of trauma can cause lasting adverse effects, limiting the ability to function and achieve mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being. Trauma can affect individuals, groups and

communities Trauma-informed practice is an approach to health and care interventions which is grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice

Barriers to the well-being and success of a looked after child

Many children who are LAC & PLAC will have experienced disrupted schooling and gaps in learning. In addition, they have some form of Special Educational Need and / or have been suspended or permanently excluded from school.

The Ofsted inspection handbook defines “disadvantaged pupils” to mean: -

- pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND);
- pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection;
- pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and
- pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last 6 years, looked after children and / or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif

We recognise that nationally there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers. Looked after children are among the most vulnerable in our society having faced painful life experiences and suffered the deprivation of a stable family life. These hardships may have long term consequences in terms of achievement and success in school and later life.

Looked after children are almost four times more likely to have a special educational need (SEN) than all children, and are almost nine times more likely to have an education, health and care (EHC) plan than all children.

A significant proportion of LAC (and therefore PLAC) have undiagnosed Speech and Language needs which impacts on educational outcomes. In recognition of this, all LAC & PLAC (with the consent of parents & carers) are screened on entry for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. The outcome of LAC screening is communicated to the Virtual School and areas of concern are addressed swiftly with in-school support. Significant or continuing concerns are referred to specialist support from Speech and Language services.

Our commitment (and what we can offer a looked after child)

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and in tackling the causes of social exclusion.

Our commitment to all LAC and PLAC is to: -

- provide a safe environment where their educational experience is valued, high aspirations are encouraged and belief in the potential of all children is held.
- ensure they 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.
- ensure that our policies and procedures meet the requirements outlined within DfE statutory guidance on the role of 'the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children' www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children

The school also supports a trauma-informed approach for our LAC / PLAC children and key members of staff, trained in trauma informed practice, play a vital role, in recognising trauma, avoiding re-traumatisation and supporting recovery for our vulnerable children.

Giving a voice to a looked after child

We believe that in order for any individual to freely express their views and wishes there must be a 'listening culture'. We ensure every effort is made to build and maintain such a culture which, for a child or young person in care, is essential for their safeguarding.

Each child in care will be supported to find a trusted adult with whom they can feel safe and empowered to raise any issues of concern and to whom they can give their own views on what would help to meet their educational and other needs. This adult would be expected to make these views known as appropriate to the relevant person in each school.

Home-school liaison

Carers may need extra help in meeting the needs of some children they care for. This may be offered through informal support, the provision of information or acknowledging that in some cases (e.g. foster carers) there may have had to work very hard in building trust of the child(ren) they care for.

Responsibilities

All staff, governors and Trustees are committed to achieving improved educational life chances for looked after children by ensuring that a number of processes and steps are promoted and monitored.

Staff are aware that being 'looked after' or having been previously looked after, has a major impact on children and young people's lives and that when considering their learning and / or behaviour, due consideration will be given to the challenges that many of them have faced and continue to deal with.

There is additional independent review and scrutiny is provided by both the senior management, Trustees (via committees) and governors who have LAC responsibility.

Trustees and Governors

Governors and Trustees will help monitor the work of the school in supporting its looked after children as a part of a larger group of vulnerable students.

Via regular meetings of the Board, sub committees and the delegation of day-to-day operational responsibility to senior leaders via the Chief Executive Officer, Trustees will ensure that: -

- the needs of LAC & PLAC are considered, reflected and supported within all relevant school policies.
- governors and Senior Leadership are aware of the legal responsibilities and guidance in regards LAC & PLAC in education.
- our admissions criteria continue to give LAC & PLAC the highest priority admission to the school in line with DfE admissions guidance.
- the annual LAC & PLAC monitoring report is scrutinised to ensure that the academic progress of those pupils is effectively being tracked and challenged, and that there are high aspirations for them.
- PPG and PP+ spending is scrutinised ensuring that is used appropriately and effectively.
- resources are available to address the needs specific to LAC & PLAC, and that disparity in academic progress in comparison to their peers within school, including patterns in attendance, suspension and permanent exclusion and provision for gifted and talented pupils 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, and has the seniority to influence schools Senior leadership, to meet and champion the needs of LAC & PLAC throughout the school.
- all staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC/PLAC.

Head teacher

Responsible for ensuring that the role of the 'Designated Teacher': -

- is filled by an appropriate member of staff at all times (including arrangements to allow for staff absences and resignation) and has the seniority to work with Senior Leadership, Governors (and Trustees where appropriate) and all staff to provide information, advice and champion the achievement and needs of LAC & PLAC pupils.
- 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.
- takes a lead role in decisions regarding the spending of PPG for LAC & PLAC.

Responsible for ensuring: -

- policies and procedures to monitor and address the needs of, and support for LAC & PLAC pupils are in place and adhered to, with reference to academic progress, admissions, attendance, safeguarding and suspensions and permanent exclusion, and that swift action is taken when concerns arise.
- the school reports on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC & PLAC to Trustees, Governors, the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Local Authority as required.
- the school works proactively with the Local Authority to provide support and address the needs of LAC & PLAC
- school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities in regards to LAC & PLAC as detailed within this policy and related guidance.
- LAC Pupil Premium is used 'to the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP)'
- the allocation of PPG funding for PLAC pupils is informed by the Education Endowment Fund guidance, is outlined within the schools our '[Pupil Premium Strategy Statement](#)' and is spent appropriately and to benefit the needs of PLAC within each the school.
- all staff are aware of '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' DfE 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 Local Authority (Social Workers and the Virtual School) are informed of the suspension or permanent exclusion from school of any LAC. If the child is PLAC then (with parental / carer consent) a referral to Enfield's PLAC Officer should also be made.
- an anti-bullying policy is in place and stringently followed which recognises that a significant proportion of LAC have experienced bullying at some point.

- wherever possible that suspension and permanent exclusion of LAC & PLAC is avoided, alternatives are considered and additional support is put in place to support those pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion.
- LAC and PLAC are encouraged and supported to continue engaging and achieving post 16.
- information with regards to LAC and PLAC is treated confidentially, but also provided swiftly to relevant agencies and new schools when sharing is required.
- the SENDCO is made aware of those LAC / PLAC children in school, works closely with the Designated Teacher and priorities their access to additional support both internally and externally, including Educational Psychology (EP) assessment.
- that, liaising with the Designated Teacher as necessary, in a secondary school setting, LAC and PLAC students moving into Sixth Form automatically receive their vulnerable group allowance / bursary and that education is included within their pathway plan.

Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher is responsible for and committed to championing the needs and attainment of LAC & PLAC pupils (up to the age of 18), in an effort to bridge the gap and raise their attainment so that it is in-line with their peers.

The role must be a qualified teacher (or an assistant head teacher or the head teacher) and, as required by the [Designated Teacher \(Looked-After Pupils etc\) \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), *“someone with sufficient authority to make things happen...[who] should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them”*

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2009/1538/contents/made

Responsibilities include: -

- coordinating support for LAC & PLAC in school and providing information, advice and training for staff and governors to raise awareness of their needs (e.g. possible mental health needs and the impact of poor attachment and trauma on behaviour and learning)
- being first point of contact for the Local Authority, LAC & PLAC, their Carers and associated professionals, ensuring that a member of staff represents the school at all relevant meetings.
- ensuring that key staff are trained through the Local Authority- [Enfield's Trauma Informed Practice in Schools and Settings](#) (E-TIPPS).
- liaising with the Local Authority Virtual School, Social Workers, Carers and other relevant professionals when LAC & PLAC are experiencing difficulties and or at risk of exclusion, arranging meetings to share concerns and plan interventions.

- ensuring that all LAC & PLAC (and their carers) have an identified member of staff that they can approach in school.
- monitoring the progress of LAC & PLAC throughout the school year culminating in an annual progress report to Governors.
- coordinating and planning smooth LAC & PLAC educational transitions, including starting school, changing Key Stage etc keeping in mind their needs, in conjunction with the carers, parents, Virtual School and other professionals.
- swiftly identifying possible learning needs, safeguarding and mental health concerns to the Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health Lead and SENDCO where appropriate and jointly planning interventions to address these concerns.
- encouraging LAC & PLAC pupils to take part in extracurricular activities and trips, and removing any hidden barriers to their involvement.
- ensuring instances of bullying affecting all pupils including LAC & PLAC pupils are acted upon swiftly and that appropriate support is put in place.
- maintaining the confidentiality of all pupils including LAC & PLAC, sharing personal information on a need to know basis only.
- using the PLAC PP+ appropriately and creatively to address the needs of PLAC pupils in school.
- ensuring that LAC & PLAC have access to appropriate ongoing careers advice at the earliest opportunity and that they are encouraged to engage with post 16 education.
- making sure, in a secondary school setting and liaising with the head teacher as necessary, that LAC & PLAC automatically receive their 'vulnerable group bursary' and that it is allocated appropriately.
- assess and monitor Personal Education Plans (PEPs) to ensure: -
 - they are accurate, effective, relevant and completed within the identified timescales with the child, social worker, carers and any other relevant professionals.
 - the PEP's for LAC children with ECHP's complement rather than mirror the EHCP.
 - that targets on the PEP are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Termly).
 - relevant staff are advised of PEP targets, making sure that staff work with pupils to meet them.
 - that the Pupil Premium for LAC is used appropriately to support the child in meeting targets outlined within the PEP.

Teaching staff

Teaching and support staff who work directly with LAC and PLAC pupils are to: -

- have high expectations in regard to their achievement
- ensure that their individual needs are met through quality, differentiated teaching.
- ensure that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils (including those with SEND) acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- be aware that LAC and PLAC usually have high rates of SEND and flag concerns regarding learning with the SENDCO and Designated Teacher.
- be aware of their specific needs in relation to 'Attachment and Trauma' and make appropriate adjustment to teaching and classroom management to meet these needs.
- be aware of the prevalence of any mental health needs, and flag concerns to the mental health lead and Designated Teacher.
- work proactively with the Designated Teacher to ensure that LAC & PLAC meet their targets and achieve, highlighting any barriers to learning, and inclusion at the earliest opportunity.
- ensure the Inclusion of LAC & PLAC within the school community, maintaining their confidentiality while also providing support with raising their self-esteem, and supporting their relationships with peers

Links to other policies and processes

All policies and processes referenced below are readily accessible on our school website.

Admissions process

Our admissions code ensures LAC & PLAC pupils are given priority for school admissions. The Designated Teacher attends LAC & PLAC admissions meetings and works closely alongside the Virtual School, Social Worker, Carers and any other professionals to ensure that pupils feel supported, and have a successful smooth transition in to school life.

Anti bullying policy

Attendance policy

The attendance process which applies to all pupils (including when parents will be contacted regarding unauthorised absence or low attendance) is outlined in this policy.

Behaviour policy

Equality objectives

Inclusion policy

This policy recognises that pupils are entitled to a balanced and broadly-based curriculum and aims to reinforce the need for teaching that is fully inclusive for all including assessing the need for any temporary part-time timetables. We also encourage each looked after child to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and readiness to learn.

Suspension and permanent exclusion policy

LAC and PLAC have disproportionately high levels of suspensions and permanent exclusion from schools nationally, placing them at a further educational disadvantage. We recognise that looked after children could be vulnerable to exclusions. Where a looked after child is at risk of exclusion, the academy will explore every practicable means to ensure that child remains in the academy.

Pupil premium strategy statement

Available on our website as per the links in the 'Definitions and overview' section at the start of this policy.

Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed and at least annually from date of last issue