



# GUIDANCE ON THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

## INTRODUCTION

TLT recognises its duty to implement the principles and practice, as outlined in the Children Act 1989, to promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC to ensure that they are able to “achieve and reach their full potential”.

TLT endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum, which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for Looked After Children (LAC) and previously Looked after Children (PLAC) realistically and use the school’s resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding

## DEFINITIONS

A “Looked-after Child” (LAC) is a child who:

- has been provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours under the Children Act 1989, sections 20 and 21 by their local authority;
- is subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989, part 4;
- Is subject to a placement order

“Previously LAC (PLAC)” are defined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as children who are no longer looked after by a Local Authority because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or were adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales.

Looked after children are also often referred to as Children in Care, a term which many children and young people prefer. For clarity, the DfE use the term Looked After Children (LAC) but the Virtual School use the term Children in Care (CiC).

## LINKS TO DFE GUIDANCE

Students who are looked after or previously looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation. This guidance is based on the Department of Education’s guidelines and aims to clarify the Trust’s responsibilities towards LAC and PLAC:-

- [The designated teacher for looked after children \(2018\)](#);
- [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children 2018](#);
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024](#);

- [Working together to safeguard children 2023](#);
- [Suspensions and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement 2024](#).
- [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25](#)

#### **THE LEARNING TRUST BOARD WILL:-**

- Ensure that each school has a designated member of staff (the Designated Teacher), who is appropriately qualified and experienced, as having the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered pupils at the Trust's schools.
- Ensure that there are no unintended barriers to the admission of LAC and PLAC either at normal transition or any other point of the school year.
- Adopt a whole-Trust approach to safeguarding arrangements and child protection, ensuring it is central to its schools' processes.
- Hold the schools to account on how they support LAC and PLAC, including how the Pupil Premium+ (PP+) is used and their level of progress.
- Ensure that the Trust's Designated Teachers (DT) have access to appropriate training, resources and support.
- Have regard to this guidance and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Ensure that the schools are working with the Local Authority to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after or previously looked after.
- Aim to provide a safe and secure environment across the Trust, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Aim to support all Trust students who are LAC and PLAC and give them access to every opportunity to achieve their potential and enjoy learning.
- Aim to fulfil the role as corporate parents to promote and support the education and well-being of the Trust's students who are LAC and PLAC.

#### **THE LEARNING TRUST SCHOOLS WILL:-**

- Appoint an appropriately trained Designated Teacher (DT) for LAC and PLAC who will act as an advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school Governor to ensure that the needs of LAC and PLAC in the school are given due consideration.
- Make a check, where a child is previously looked-after, that the child is eligible for support by asking the child's parents for evidence of the child's previously looked-after status.
- Support the designated teacher in carrying out their role by making the time and facilities available for them to succeed in carrying out their duties and ensure that they attend appropriate training on LAC and PLAC.
- Comply with their obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has details of the child’s social worker and the name of the Virtual School Head in the local authority that looks after the child.
- Ensure that for care leavers, DSLs have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver and liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.
- Ensure that when dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, all agencies work together and take prompt action when it is necessary to safeguard these children.
- Oversee this guidance and monitor its implementation, feeding back to the governing board **annually** on the following:
  - The number of LAC and PLAC in the school
  - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
  - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups
  - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensure all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC and PLAC is a key priority.
- Ensure PP+ for PLAC is managed effectively. For both looked-after and previously looked-after children PP+ is not a personal budget for individual children. The VSH and school manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked-after or previously looked-after children and according to children’s needs.
- Understand the role of the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) and work with them to promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC.
- Must follow statutory guidance provided by the DfE relating to suspensions and permanent exclusions where a LAC or PLAC is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion including:-
  - consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child’s behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion;
  - review the PEP every term and record any concerns about the pupil's behaviour, as well as how the pupil is being supported to improve their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of exclusion
  - what actions to take prior to making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude;
  - who to notify once the decision to suspend or permanently exclude has been made;
  - document the provision of immediate suitable education in the child’s PEP where a LAC is excluded.

#### **THE DESIGNATED TEACHERS WILL:**

- Maintain an up-to-date record of LAC and PLAC who are on the school roll.
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each student, which includes appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child’s Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Ensure that they are aware of LAC and PLAC’s SEN needs, and be able to identify signs of potential social, emotional and mental health issues these children may experience.
- Ensure that there are effective procedures in place to support looked after and previously looked after children’s learning.

- Ensure that someone attends Children’s Services Reviews on each student and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with the Virtual School for looked-after Children on a regular basis regarding the performance, attendance and attainment of looked-after Children.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when looked after and previously looked after children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up-to-date and informed about LAC and PLAC where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC, along with all children, are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.
- Report to the Governing Body each term on the performance of the LAC and PLAC who are on the roll of the school.

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