



Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy



Approved by Governors on: 11.2.26

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Exec Head Teacher: Elizabeth Hopewell

Date of Review: February 2027

Vision Statement

We aim to create a safe, happy and nurturing environment for all our children!

Mission Statement

The Orchard School strives to provide the best quality teaching and learning with an inclusive and personalised curriculum, where all achievements are celebrated.

1. Introduction

This policy is based on the statutory guidance for schools regarding the promotion of education achievements and welfare of Looked After Children (LAC) and children who have previously been Looked After. The Orchard School will support the responsible Local Authorities Statutory corporate parenting of this vulnerable group, ensuring all required responsibilities are fulfilled.

The educational achievement and welfare of LAC and children who have previously been Looked After will be promoted by The Orchard School.

Looked after children are one of the most vulnerable groups on society. The majority of Looked after children have suffered abuse or neglect and for all, becoming looked after is likely to be a distressing experience. It is recognised nationally that considerable educational underachievement exists across this group when compared to their peers.

2. Aims of the Guidance

‘Corporate Parenting’ emphasises the collective responsibility of the whole local authority to achieve good parenting. We recognise that we are an essential partner in this process and as such, we aim to:

- Act as an effective advocate for any child in, or who has been in public care, attending our School.
- Implement the relevant statutory elements of the Guidance.
- Have high expectations of children in public care attending school.
- Develop and implement effective inclusive strategies.
- Intervene early and appropriately to support any child in public care who is experiencing difficulties, liaising promptly with other professionals.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and social workers to gather and share information to plan and monitor achievement.
- Listen to the child or young person and/or closely observe and aim to understand their behaviour and its communicative intent or function, respecting their rights of confidentiality.
- Support the statutory review process by providing reports and attending review meetings.

3. Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC)

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

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 subjects 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).

Children In Care

The term 'In Care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order made by the Court 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.

Accommodated Children

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989— 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 one Local Authority but may be living in another authority.

- A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. For these children the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are subject to corporate parenting.
- A previously looked-after child is one who is 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 person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.
- A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Children may be looked after by Sandwell local authority or by another authority but living in Sandwell.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) 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,'

4. School commitment

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. Nationally, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers.

The Orchard School recognises that Looked After and Previously Looked After Children may experience specific and significant disadvantage within the school setting and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. The School recognises that they may have specific needs, in addition to their SEND, and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and may experience personal distress and uncertainty.

The school believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide an appropriate learning environment. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After and Previously Looked After children are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy school and achieve to the best of their potential.

The Orchard approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After and Previously Looked After children.
- Ensuring that there is a designated governor responsible for looked after and Previously Looked After children.

- All Looked After and Previously Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child's parents and carer, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.
- Having high expectations and ensuring equal access to a balanced highly personalised curriculum.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the achievements of the child and their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ensure 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 & PLAC.
- The DT is provided with the time to fulfil their role and completes the LA Statutory Designated Teacher Training 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 & PLAC 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 Orchard School 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 & PLAC 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 & PLAC 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.
- Procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC & PLAC and act where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- School staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities regarding LAC & PLAC.

5.2 Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that all Governors are aware of their responsibilities and the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher undertakes appropriate training and is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities as below.
- Ensure that a Designated Governor for LAC & PLAC is appointed to regularly review how the school addresses the welfare and progress of these children with the Designated Teacher and report back to the Governing Body and Head Teacher.
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC & PLAC .
- Hold the school to account for the appropriate allocation of the LAC & PLAC premium grant to enhance the attainments of LAC & PLAC .
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support the needs of LAC & PLAC .
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC & PLAC are recognised and met.
- Receive a termly report including the number of LAC & PLAC on roll; their attendance record; progression data; any exclusions; the destinations of LAC & PLAC who leave the school.

5.3 Designated Teacher

A Designated Teacher is a member of staff who is responsible for the success of children who are looked after or who have previously been looked after. They should be committed to championing for the needs and attainment of pupils who are looked after or who have previously been looked after. The Designated Teacher is a qualified teacher and someone with sufficient experience.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Having a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child in the school.
- Acting as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC / PLAC.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the LAC / PLAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensure all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- 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. mental health.
- Being the 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 all staff are trained on Trauma & Attachment.
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Liaising with the 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. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. This is usually the class teacher at The Orchard School.
- Coordinating and planning smooth LAC & PLAC 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 & PLAC to take part in extracurricular activities and trips, and removing any hidden barriers to their involvement.
- Ensuring instances of bullying affecting LAC & PLAC is acted upon swiftly and that appropriate support is put in place.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of LAC & PLAC, sharing personal information on a need to know basis only.
- Using the PLAC PP+ funding appropriately and creatively to address the needs of PLAC in school.
- Ensuring that the PEPs (Personal Education Plans) for LAC are accurate, effective, relevant and completed within the identified timescales with the child, social worker, carers and any other relevant professionals.
- PEPs for LAC children with ECHP'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.
- Ensuring a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and guidance regarding LAC / PLAC.

5.4 All staff

All staff should:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC/PLAC, as for all pupils.
- Ensure that the individual needs of LAC & PLAC are met through quality first teaching.
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of LAC/PLAC. Know the specific needs of LAC & PLAC in relation to Attachment and Trauma and make appropriate adjustments to teaching and classroom management to meet these needs.
- Work to enable these children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of LAC/PLAC. Be aware of the prevalence of LAC & PLAC mental health needs, and flag concerns to the DT and Mental Health Lead.
- Maintain LAC/PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Be aware that confidential information regarding LAC/PLAC will be shared with other school staff on a "need to know" basis
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Contribute to the PEP meetings for these children.
- Ensure accurate record keeping regarding progress and share this information with the Designated Teacher.

6. The Personal Education Plan

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After child starting at The Orchard School or being taken into care whilst at the school. This will be reviewed termly. The PEP will provide a termly opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Sandwell use an Electronic EPEP system and Social workers, Independent reviewing Officers, Carers and the Young person will have access to PEP meeting information electronically.

Targets agreed at the PEP meeting may incorporate targets that the child is already working on in school and that work towards their long-term outcomes (as identified in their EHCP).

LAC & PLAC Premium grant funding could allow for 1:1 work to be undertaken more frequently and maximise opportunities for young people to learn throughout the week. Sometimes this includes allocating the child additional sessions e.g. Swimming through enhanced staffing levels.

For a small number of Pupils, PEP targets can be identified by themselves to learn a new skill e.g. to ride a bike. As long as academic progress is already good and outstanding, we can support this learning by using the LAC & PLAC Premium grant to purchase specialist equipment or employ additional staffing allowing new skills to be learnt and refined.

On occasion LAC & PLAC Premium grant money is used to replicate equipment used in school that carers can then use at home e.g. a sand tray accessible for wheelchair users. This allows parents to work on skills at home.

7. Support and resources

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Grant for LAC is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that children meet the targets outlined within their PEP. PP+ is extra funding for schools to spend to close the gap between LAC and their peers. Schools also get PP+ for children who were previously LAC. PP+ is for children from Reception to Y11. For children in Early Years settings, there is an alternative called Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).

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.

The Governing body should ensure that the school allocates its resources to support appropriate provision for LAC & PLAC, to meet the objectives set out in this policy.

8. Attendance and Home-school liaison

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

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work to develop a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC & PLAC to achieve their potential. Parent evenings as well as PEP and EHCP review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

9. Admission arrangements

Due to local authority care arrangements LAC & PLAC may enter school mid-term and it is important that they are given a positive welcome and, where appropriate, additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

The school recognises that Looked After children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Looked After Children in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

10. Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS.

11. Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. The Orchard school is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children DfE 2018.

The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities DfE 2018.

12. Other Relevant School Policies

- Admissions Policy and Arrangements
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Premium Report
- Safeguarding Policy