



Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy



Approved by Governors on: 23.10.23

Signed by Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Allen'.

Exec Head Teacher: Elizabeth Hopewell

Date of Review: November 2024

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 statutory guidance for schools regarding Looked After and Previously Looked After children (LAC / PLAC) ^{1,2} Associated guidance on the education of these children is referred to in these documents.

1.1 Definitions

- 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.

2. 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.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Head Teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC / PLAC. (Another appropriate person should be identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take long term sick leave.)
- Ensure that 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.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC / PLAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities regarding LAC / PLAC.

3.2 Governing Body

- 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.

3.3 Designated Teacher

- Have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child in the school.
- Act as a central point of contact within the school for LAC / PLAC . This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements between agencies, carers, parents and school are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC / PLAC.
- Take 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.
- Ensure 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.
- Put arrangements in place to ensure their needs identified and met. This may include providing equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintain 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.
- Ensure that each LAC / PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can communicate with. 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.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately. This includes use of the LAC / PLAC Premium grant.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil moves to a different school.
- Pro-actively support transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attend training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and guidance regarding LAC / PLAC.

3.4 All staff

- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of LAC / PLAC.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC / PLAC, as for all pupils.
- Work to enable these children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of LAC / PLAC.

- 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.

4. The Personal Education Plan

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After or Previously 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 have moved to 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 often allows for 1:1 work to be undertaken more frequently and maximises 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, 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 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.

5. Support and resources

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) allocates a LAC / PLAC premium grant for each child in these categories. This is intended to be used for additional support to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils to enable them to reach their potential.

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.

6. Home-school liaison

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.

7. 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).

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. References

- 1. Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance for local authorities DfE 2018*
- 2. The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities DfE 2018*
- 3. Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children DfE, DoH. 2015*

Written / reviewed by Barbara Ackerley Feb 2019, July 2021.

Reviewed by Lauren Petrie October 2023