



Isle of Wight  
Education Federation

The Governing Board of the Isle of Wight Education Federation

## LAC and PLAC Policy

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Approved by	Full Governing Board
Approval date	November 2023
Review frequency	Annually
Next review	November 2024

**Our intent:** *We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*

**Key challenges:** Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under achievement when compared to other groups. Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

We will address this by:

- ensuring that all children receive access to a broad and balanced curriculum that motivates and inspires them to learn. helping to provide the best possible education for looked after children as much as any other.
- recognising that in many cases the emotional impact of experiences are likely to be significant barriers to progress and so we will carry out careful planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the best possible outcomes for our LAC and PLAC students.
- seeking to give our young people in care professional help, encouragement and support, so they find our school a welcoming and friendly place.
- being fully inclusive and challenging negative views and stereotypes.
- offering support to and work with their foster carers on how to assist the young person's learning and enhance educational opportunities.

**Responsibilities:** *We support the Government's agenda for giving all looked after children the same life chances as any other child; we want them to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and achieve economic well being.*

The Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children 2015, (updated 2018) place duty on us to work together to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. We recognise our responsibilities as governors and teachers and we actively want to support the local authority in undertaking its statutory responsibility, under section 52 of the Children Act 2004. This is to help this vulnerable group to succeed in education, champion their needs, raise awareness and challenge negative assumptions at all levels.

As school Governors and teachers we are aware we can make a significant difference. We recognise that we have a key role and major influence to ensure that the needs of looked after children are considered at the improvement planning and policy level through to monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes.

We will introduce an annual reporting cycle on the progress and performance of looked after children, to be presented to the full governing body by our appointed Designated Teacher during the autumn term of each academic year as a standing agenda item.

The Designated Teacher will carry out the specific duties below in relation to the looked after children and is required to undertake the recommendations set down in the statutory guidance entitled The Designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on Designated Teacher roles and responsibilities Feb 2018.

### **The Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC will:**

- be the central point of contact for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the individual looked after children we have on roll;
- take the lead role in the analysis of professional assessment and progress towards challenging educational targets and subsequent reviews to be recorded into the relevant sections of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- maintain a detailed record of all Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children – including information relating to current status, type of placement, name and contact details of Social Worker, Virtual School Head, relevant health information, SEN status, PEP information, current and historic assessment information.
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed when a child enters the school and is then reviewed at least every 6 months – this should take into account the opinions of the social worker, class teacher, carers and where possible the child and their parents/carers.
- complete and keep PEPs updated, plus ensuring targets are SMART
- work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- coordinate support for the child in school, liaising where necessary with other professionals and carers
- ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account
- establish positive working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews;
- arrange support and sanctuary to help settle a child into the school, and at other times; ensure that the child feels safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support;
- arrange the transfer of records if a child moves school and arrange for written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required to be shared as appropriate to the individual
- work with virtual school head's and the child's social worker to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan and to ensure their safety and security.

### **Teaching and support Staff will:**

assist in the implementation and support of this policy for looked after children. All staff will be required to:

- ensure the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained;
- be familiar with, and respond appropriately to, requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews;
- respond positively to any request by a child to be the person they want to talk with;
- ensure that no child in care becomes the victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and eradicated;
- positively promote the self-esteem of looked after children;
- convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.

### **The Governing Body will:**

monitor and evaluate the impact of our school provision, teaching and learning and support for looked after children. The annual reporting cycle informs on the following key aspects of provision:

- the number of looked after children on roll;
- attendance statistics for any authorised and unauthorised absence;
- the frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion;

- how they are performing in core subjects, their progress and any value added measure when compared against initial baseline assessment;
- the frequency of them taking part in extra-curricular activities;
- the attainment relative to the targets set in core and foundation subjects;
- the provision arrangements for additional support identified to include 1:1 tuition at school and any externally added booster work provided in the care home;
- the quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP

### **Inclusion additional information:**

LAC & PLAC pupils 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 & PLAC pupils having a robust, enjoyable and valuable school experience.

The experiences of LAC & PLAC has resulted in disproportionate levels of Special Educational Needs within these groups. Nationally 70% of LAC have some form of SEN. In acknowledgement of this, individual attainment is monitored closely by the Designated Teacher via the PEP process and any concerns are identified and highlighted to the SENCO and Virtual School. Concerns raised by Carers, Social Workers and the Virtual School are welcomed and swiftly acted upon. Where it is felt that further assessment may be needed, LAC & PLAC access to the SEN assessment process and interventions are prioritised.

### **Funding: Pupil Premium Grant & Pupil Premium Plus information**

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) A Pupil Premium Grant of £500 per term is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that pupils meet the targets outlined within their PEP. In line with Local Authority policy, pupil premium for each LAC 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 exclusion].
- 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 Virtual School will be sought.

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+ will be used to fund this.

PP+ for PLAC is also 'pooled' and used to provide additional support and services to raise the attainment of PLAC within school as outlined by our online Pupil Premium Strategy Statement and as part of a 3-year Pupil Premium Strategy, for instance:

- One to one tuition
- Mentoring programmes

## **Attendance process**

The attendance of LAC & PLAC is carefully monitored and reported daily to Welfare Call. Carers and Parents of LAC & PLAC 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 process**

LAC and PLAC have disproportionately high levels of exclusions from schools nationally, placing them at a further educational disadvantage.

In line with Local Authority and DfE Guidance, we do not permanently exclude LAC & PLAC. 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 (Social workers, the Virtual School or the Permanence Educational Support Officer) will be sought where it is felt that a LAC or PLAC may become at risk of exclusion. Support and alternatives to exclusion will be considered.

Alternatives to exclusion may include:

- SLT Supervisions
- Restorative Justice
- Managed Moves (through the Headteacher of the Virtual School)
- CAMHs support
- Additional therapeutic intervention via the Adoption Fund (PLAC only)

Where a fixed term exclusion of a LAC is unavoidable, parents/carers and the Virtual School will be contacted prior to the pupil 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.

## **Definitions:**

**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

living in a residential children's home or living in residential settings like schools or secure units

**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.'

## **The Designated Teacher (DT) for LAC & PLAC**

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 DT is a qualified teacher and “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.” or The Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher, as stipulated by Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009.