



# **Looked After Children Policy (including LAC and PLAC)**

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**Reviewed and updated March 2021**

## **Policy for the Education of 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children'.**

### **Rationale:**

There is national evidence that 'Looked After' (LAC) or 'Previously Looked After' (PLAC) are socially disadvantaged, significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion than their peers. Schools have a major role to play in promoting the achievement of such vulnerable children by ensuring that they are healthy and safe and provided with the support they need in order to achieve their full potential. This is in accordance with section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Enabling 'LAC' and 'PLAC' to succeed is a key priority for Nelson Primary School.

Our policy takes account of:

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Pupil Premium: How schools are using the pupil premium to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils (DfE 2012)
- DfES Statutory Guidance to Governing Bodies: "Supporting Looked After Learners" 2006.
- The Local Authority's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the education of looked after children (LAC).
- 'If this were my child' (Local Government Information Unit 2003)
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2007.
- "Show Me How I Matter: a guide to the education of looked after children" LGA and IDEA publication 2006.
- Section 576 Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 (amended)

### **Objectives:**

Nelson Primary School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of 'LAC' and 'PLAC' is based on the following principles:

- High expectations
- Promoting inclusion by challenging attitudes towards vulnerable children
- Promoting regular attendance
- Early intervention and priority action
- Targeting support
- Minimising exclusions

- Achieving continuity and promoting stability
- Listening to children
- Promoting a wider learning experience
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

As for all our pupils, Nelson Primary School is committed to helping all 'LAC' and 'PLAC' to achieve the highest possible standards. This can be measured by their attitude to learning, academic progress and general well-being. Nelson Primary School will promote the needs of such vulnerable children, by raising awareness and challenging negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve their full potential. Our responsibilities apply to children who are currently 'Looked After' or who have been 'Looked After' in the past.

This group of children includes those who may have a range of legal statuses including:

- Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Child Arrangement Order(CAO)
- Adoption Order

The school is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and we adhere to the following statutory requirements:

- Ensure a Designated Teacher for 'Looked After Children' is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is implemented for all 'LAC' and that these are regularly reviewed in line with statutory and Newham guidance on PEPs for every looked after child.

This policy links with a number of other school documents and policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of 'LAC' when reviewing the following:

- Oversubscription Criteria
- School Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Duty
- Safeguarding Policy
- Inclusion Policy

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEAD TEACHER**

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for 'LAC' and 'PLAC' according to Government Guidance: *"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"*.
- Ensure that, in accordance with the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, section 20, cover arrangements are in place, should the designated teacher not be available to carry out these legal duties.
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC have the highest priority in the school's admissions criteria, and in the school's oversubscription criteria in compliance with the DfE School Admissions Code (2014). The Code applies to admissions to all maintained schools in England.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission, progress and attendance) of 'LAC' and 'PLAC' and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of 'LAC'.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- In accordance with the DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions for maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England (2017), Head teachers should avoid, as far as possible, excluding 'LAC' and 'PLAC'. If the school has concerns about a Looked-After Child's behaviour, the Virtual School Head (VSH) should be informed at the earliest opportunity. This would allow the VSH and other professionals to work in partnership with the school to:
  - Consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required, to prevent the need for exclusion.
  - Where necessary, make provision for assessing the suitability of provision for a pupil's SEN. (Where a pupil has an EHC plan, schools should consider requesting an early annual review or interim/emergency review).

## **THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

Government guidance recommends that the Designated Teacher should be 'someone with sufficient authority to make things happen; who should be an advocate for 'LAC', accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.'

It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Specialist training, advice and support for the role of Designated Teacher will be provided by the virtual school for Looked After Children'. It should also be noted, that the

remit of OFSTED inspectors and School Improvement Partners now includes a specific focus on LAC; monitoring how the school has promoted their inclusion and attainment, and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

Our Designated Teacher for current 'LAC' and 'PLAC' is the Assistant Head teacher for Inclusion, Deena Osborne. With regard to 'LAC', her responsibilities are as follows:

- To ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer; using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- To ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.

### **Monitor, track and review progress**

- To ensure that attendance is monitored; and to intervene, if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy.
- To track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, and consideration may be given to use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress.
- To set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- To promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.

### **Transition**

- To be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when LAC and PLAC are moving between key stages and when moving schools.

### **Record keeping**

- To maintain an up-to-date record of LAC and PLAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensure all necessary information is passed to relevant staff.
- LAC and PLAC should be aware information is recorded, and of who has access to it. How this information is shared with them, will depend on their age and level of understanding.

### **Confidentiality**

- To ensure confidentiality and that sharing personal information is on a 'need to know' basis.

## **Training**

- To attend Designated Teacher training provided by Newham Virtual School as required, and keep up to date with the latest developments and policies concerning LAC and PLAC.
- To ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by LAC and PLAC. Staff should be aware of the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.

## **Governing Body**

- To report to the Governing Body, preferably each term, but at least on an annual basis, the points as detailed on page 5 of this policy document
- To act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC and PLAC.

## **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

The PEP is a vital document, as it is an integral part of a child's wider care plan and provides a 'collective' memory about the child's education.

- To ensure that PEPs are updated and reviewed three times a year, or at the point of any major change and that they contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan.
- To ensure that a PEP is completed with the child (where appropriate), their social worker, carer and other relevant people at least 2 weeks before their statutory reviews.
- To ensure that the child's views are included in PEP meetings and the child is supported to complete the Pupil Consultation section of the Personal Education Plan to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings.
- To discuss the most effective use of the Pupil Premium grant in order to raise attainment of 'LAC' and report on its use at individual PEP meetings.
- To ensure that each 'LAC' has an identified member of staff they can talk to: this need not be the designated teacher, as it will be based on the child's own situation and wishes. It should be noted that members of staff who take on this role may also need to make use of appropriate support from the school's pastoral staff and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- To track academic and other progress and target support appropriately.
- To co-ordinate any support for 'LAC' that is necessary within the school and from outside.
- To ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.

- To facilitate and encourage 'LAC' to join extra-curricular activities and maximise out of school learning.
- To attend planning and review meetings whenever possible.
- To act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as needs of 'LAC'.
- To set up timely meetings with relevant parties (eg, carer, social worker, birth family, other professionals) where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or at risk of exclusion.
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and where appropriate between schools.
- To be pro-active in supporting transitions and planning when moving to a new phase in their education.
- To promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- To actively monitor and prevent bullying of 'LAC' in school.
- To share information on individual 'LAC' with other school staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- To ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. End of year reports) are forwarded to the child's Social Worker, in addition to the foster carer or Residential Social Worker and if appropriate parent/s and the Virtual School.
- To exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in a child's circumstances, e.g. if there is a change of care placement or there are significant issues that will affect educational provision eg; behaviour or attendance

## **SEND/EHCP**

A considerable number of LAC have special education needs. Of those, a significant proportion will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The school will need to ensure that:

- The child's EHC plan works in harmony with their care plan to tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the child's needs are being met.
- Some children may have undiagnosed special needs. As part of the PEP process, there should be robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are addressed through the SEND framework.

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

The Nominated Governor for 'LAC' is currently Adwoa Debrah. Her responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of 'LAC' and 'PLAC'.
- Ensuring the school has an overview of the needs of all its 'LAC', regardless of their originating authority.
- Allocating resources to meet the needs of 'LAC'.
- Ensuring the school's policies and procedures support the needs of 'LAC'.
- Ensure there is a designated member of the school staff with responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of registered pupils who are or have been 'Looked After' in accordance with subsection 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Ensure that the designated person undertakes appropriate training and has regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to 'LAC'.

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

The named Governor with special responsibility for LAC and PLAC in the school will include:

- Support the Head Teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC and PLAC are recognised and met.
- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, support appropriate provision for LAC and PLAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.
- The named Governor will be expected to have completed the relevant Governor training on LAC and PLAC.
- Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on LAC and PLAC by monitoring how the school has promoted their inclusion and attainment to include



the effectiveness of joint working with other services.

- Receive a termly report setting out:
  - The number of LAC and PLAC on the school's roll
  - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
  - Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
  - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
  - The destinations of pupils who leave the school

The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respects the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF**

All our staff will:

### **Responsibilities of all staff**

- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.
- Recognise the value of multi-agency partnership working, and how important it is when it comes to meeting the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Be aware that, due to care arrangements, LAC and PLAC may enter school mid-term and it is important they are given a positive welcome especially during pre-entry visits to help them settle.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC report incidents of being bullied in school, so work to prevent bullying in line with the school's policy.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request for a Keyworker to whom they can talk when they feel it necessary.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all pupils.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.

- Understand that information on LAC and PLAC will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- Maintain LAC and PLAC's confidentiality.
- Engage with relevant training that is provided on how to redress the educational attainment gap and disadvantage LAC and PLAC experience.

The Head Teacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Advice, information and support is available from the Newham virtual school for 'Children Looked After' to Governors and staff around general issues as well as issues relating to specific children.