



KING'S HOUSE SCHOOL

RICHMOND



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND POST-LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (POST-LAC) POLICY

Member of staff responsible:	Head and Child Protection Governor
Date of policy review:	March 2022
Date of next review:	March 2024
Approved by SMT:	March 2022



INTRODUCTION

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of Looked after Children (LACs) and Previously Looked after Children (Post-LACs) and schools play a pivotal role in this.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This policy links with a number of other school policies and procedures and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of LACs and Post-LACs when reviewing them:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Admissions Policy;
- Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Equality of Opportunity Policy;
- Accessibility Policy;
- Learning Support Policy and Plan.

DEFINITIONS

The term “Looked After” was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a Care Order (whereby a court order grants shared Parental Responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child’s welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full time basis.

Previously looked-after children is defined by the DfE (February 2018) as those who:

- are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order;
- were adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales. ‘State care’ is care provided by a local authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of LACs. The School notes that this statutory guidance currently applies only to maintained schools in England, however, King's House School will, so far as is possible given the School's status, follow the statutory guidance for maintained schools in supporting any LACs and Post-LACs on the school roll.

The guidance states that schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all LACs and Post-LACs;
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all LACs and Post-LACs;
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and trancies for all LACs and Post-LACs;
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of LACs and Post-LACs;
- Develop systems of communications and protocols;
- Promote the attendance of LACs and Post-LACs.

We will:

- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for LACs and Post-LACs – this will be the same as the Safeguarding Governor identified in the Safeguarding Policy;
- Work with social workers to ensure that each LAC has a current Personal Education Plan in place;
- Ensure all LACs and Post-LACs have the same opportunities as other pupils to participate fully in the curriculum, out-of-school learning and extra-curricular activities;
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after or previously looked after;
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate;
- Review all school policies regularly in the light of the most recent DfE and DH guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care;
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies;
- Endeavour to support all LACs and Post-LACs educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Many LACs and Post-LACs do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel “different”. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be



aware of their care status, however, we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all LACs and Post-LACs are made to feel welcome and have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with LACs and Post-LACs.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

THE NAMED GOVERNOR

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- The School has a coherent policy for LACs and Post-LACs;
- The School's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance;
- The Designated Teacher has received appropriate training;
- LACs and Post-LACs have equal access to all areas of the curriculum;
- The Governing body receives an annual report.

THE HEAD

The Head is responsible for:

- Appointing the Designated Teacher.
- Ensuring that the Designated Teacher and other relevant staff have received appropriate training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensuring that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission, progress, attendance and exclusions (if any) of LACs and Post-LACs, and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Reporting to the governing body on an annual basis on the following, ensuring that the information for this report preserves the anonymity and respects the confidentiality of the pupils concerned:
 - The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any);
 - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
 - Their results in public exams, 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 DESIGNATED TEACHER

The Designated Teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding LACs and Post-LACs of the School by:

- Maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all LACs and Post-LACs and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis;
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by LACs and Post-LACs and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements;
- Acting as an advocate for LACs and Post-LACs in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances.

The Designated Teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- Ensuring that each LAC and Post-LACs has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes;
- Gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after or previously looked after;
- Building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers;
- Being proactive in setting goals for the child's PEP;
- Participating in education meetings;
- Ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of LACs;
- Serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education.

The Designated Teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school by:

- Ensuring that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people;
- Tracking academic progress and target support appropriately;
- Intervening, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy or other similar concern;
- Promoting inclusion in all areas of school life, including extra-curricular activities and out of school learning;
- Working closely with the Learning Support department to ensure all LACs and Post-LACs with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate academic or behavioural support;
- Setting up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion;
- Ensuring, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings;
- Having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions;

- Ensuring all LACs and Post-LACs are made to feel part of the school environment.

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS

Each LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing, however, the School's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses;
- Interests, both in and out of school;
- Developmental and educational and pastoral needs;
- Future plans and how these can be supported;
- Issues arising for the child;
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

SCHOOL TRIPS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Given the delays that LACs experience in getting parental consent for school trips and special activities, we will aim to ensure that LACs enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving places for them on trips or on activities.

COMPLAINTS

The School has a Complaints Policy that is available to all parents and carers of pupils. If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should, in the first instance, raise it with the Designated Teacher who will try to resolve the situation.