

CATCOTT PRIMARY



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

'...where learning takes you to greater heights...'

Approved by:

Date:

September 2024

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

Who are our Looked After Children? (LAC)

The term 'looked after' has a specific, legal meaning based on the Children Act 1989; a child is 'Looked After' by a local authority if they fall into one of the following:

- Is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- Is subject to a care order (to put the child into the care of the local authority)
- Is subject to a placement order (to put the child up for adoption)

They may have been taken into care by the local authority or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s).

Who are our Previously Looked after Children? (PLAC)

Previously Looked After Children are those who (DFE definition):

- Are no longer looked after by the Local Authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangement order or a residence order
- Were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

INTRODUCTION

The governing body of Catcott Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. Catcott Primary School recognises that LAC and PLAC can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting. We recognise that LAC and PLAC may have faced significant trauma in the form of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including abuse, neglect, loss and/or rejection. Staff and the governing body recognise that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of LAC, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in Statutory Guidance on Promoting Education in LAC/PLAC.

The Guidance places a duty to safeguard LAC, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they can "achieve to and reach their full potential." The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out seven principles:

- To promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To consider the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people.
- To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for children and young people.
- For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work and to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Guidance introduces two key measures:

- To ensure Designated Teachers are nominated in every school.
- To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all LAC.

Catcott Primary School's governing body is committed to ensuring that the Designated Teacher and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

AIMS

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our LAC and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our LAC, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

IN PURSUIT OF THIS POLICY, WE WILL

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them. Catcott's designated teacher is the Headteacher.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of LAC and PLAC in the school are considered at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher. Catcott Primary School 's designated governor is Dr Mark Peel.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on LAC.

LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

Children Act 1989

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 Children and Families Act 2014

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

DfE statutory guidance (2018)

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/2018-01-26-looked-after-children-education-guidance.pdf)

DfE statutory guidance (2018)

[The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/2018-01-26-looked-after-children-education-guidance.pdf)

DfE statutory guidance (2022)

[Promoting the health and well-being of looked-after children - update note added to start in August 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/2022-08-01-looked-after-children-health-well-being-update-note.pdf)

DfE statutory guidance (2023)

[Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/2023-01-26-looked-after-children-exclusion-guidance.pdf)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be familiar with and follow the DfE guidance as presented in the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (publishing.service.gov.uk).
- Maintain an up to date record of all looked after children who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home
 - SEND Code of Practice
 - Child Protection information when appropriate
 - Baseline information and all test results
 - Attendance figures
 - Exclusions
- Be an advocate for LAC and PLAC.

- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each child who is looked after to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Education, Health and Care Plan and associated plans, Individual Education Plans (IEPS), Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme. This plan will be reviewed at a termly PEP meeting.
- Chair an Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) meeting when it is deemed appropriate to hold one (for example when a child is due to transition to a new school). The EPPLAC supports schools and parents/carers in securing and promoting the education and wellbeing of PLAC. There is no specified frequency for completing EPPLACs.
- Liaise with the Virtual School for LAC on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of Children in Care.
- Attend training and network meetings led by the Virtual School.
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding LAC or PLAC are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about LAC where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC, along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of LAC.
- Report to the Governing body annually on the performance of the LAC who are on the roll of the school.
- Ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for the child and carer/s (and parent/s where possible). Note any specific requirements, including care status.
- Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this may not be the designated teacher and should be based on the child's wishes.)
- Ensure entry to examinations as appropriate for all LAC and PLAC.
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Ensure staff and governors receive relevant information and training where required.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance of the designated teacher as far as possible.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning.

- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Alongside the County Finance team, keep abreast of funding streams available to LAC and monitor their effective use.
- Be proactive in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.

All staff will:

- Be aware of the LAC and PLAC in their classes and give them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision and positive discrimination whilst preserving confidentiality and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of CIC.
- Ensure entry to accredited courses as appropriate for LAC and PLAC.
- Be familiar with the Guidance on LAC and PLAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a LAC/PLAC is having trouble.
- To anticipate and support LAC/PLAC through key transitions during their primary school career.
- Maintain LAC/PLAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively e.g. avoiding reference to their care status/PEP meetings in front of their peers.
- Due to care arrangements, LAC/PLAC may enter school mid-term and staff must recognise that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

All Governors will:

- Support the Local Authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC.
- Appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of all LAC and PLAC on the school roll.
- Nominate a governor for LAC and PLAC who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is appropriately qualified for the role (in accordance with regulations).
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific needs of Children in Care.
- Ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC/PLAC, according to the Code of Practice on admissions.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for LAC.

- For child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy tri-annually.
- Ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give LAC and PLAC equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school
 - The National Curriculum and public examinations
 - Additional educational support where this is needed
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Work experience and careers guidance.

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC/PLAC may enter school mid-term and that 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 LAC are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise them in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE School Admissions Code Statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, school's adjudicators, and admission appeals panels (2014).

PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS (PPP)

PPP for LAC will be delegated to schools by the relevant virtual school. We will allocate the Page 6 PPP to support appropriate provision for individual LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and the child's PEP. We will work in partnership with the child's Virtual School to ensure that LAC receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve in all aspects of school life. For PLAC, the PPP funding will go directly to the school's budget if the child is listed as PLAC on the January census. The use of this funding will be identified in consultation with the young person and their parents.

SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

Catcott Primary School recognises that LAC are particularly vulnerable to suspensions and permanent exclusions, and so we will ensure that when managing any behavioural need that the child may have, their background and educational need are considered. Catcott Primary School will put in place for the child additional support by every appropriate practical mean, with the aim to result in improvements to their behaviour and thus avoid exclusion where possible.

A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of suspension and permanent exclusion. The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant, those detailed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support to prevent a suspension or permanent exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy and Exclusion Policy for more information.

TRAINING

The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the statutory guidance (as above). The Designated Teacher will attend training and termly network meetings run by the Virtual School.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links with the following policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of LAC and PLAC when reviewing them:

- Behaviour policy
- Exclusions policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Equality policy
- Safeguarding policy
- SEND policy
- Admissions policy.