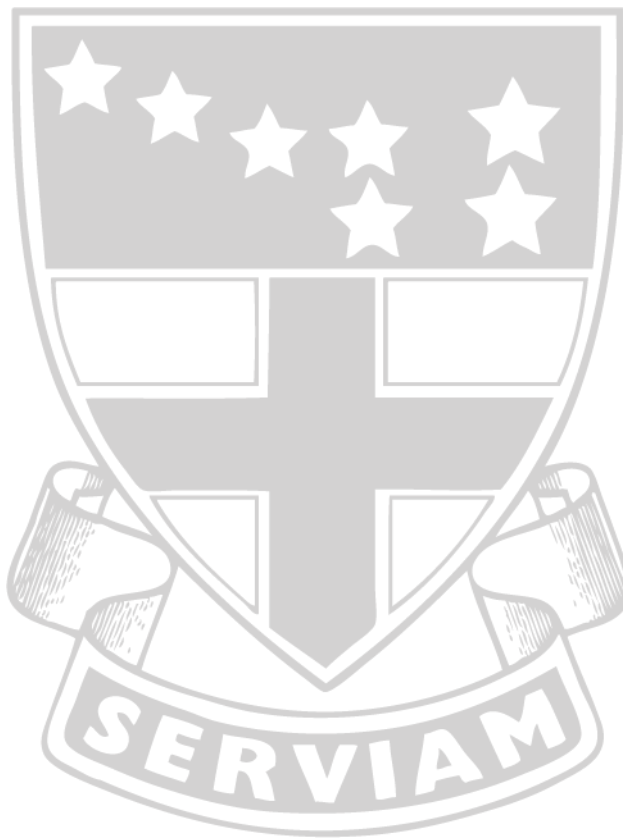




Looked After Children (LAC) AND Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) POLICY



Date of Review: March 2025

Date of Next Review: March 2026

Rationale

Nationally, children who are Looked-After (LAC) or Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Many LAC and PLAC have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of time at school. Many have special educational needs (SEND). In many cases the emotional impact of their experiences are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress and this contributes to gaps in their learning. Attainment data for LAC and PLAC shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non-LAC.

It is therefore essential schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children. All schools should have a policy for LAC and PLAC that is subject to review and approval by the Governing Body. This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004. The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Governors (2009); the Children and Families Act 2014 and Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-after Children statutory guidance for local authorities (2018).

Terminology

Looked After-Children (LAC) are children who are subject to a Care Order granted by the Court or a Section 20, voluntary agreement between parent(s) and the Local Authority. Previously Looked-After Children are children who have been Looked-After and are now subject to an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order.

The Objective

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of LAC and PLAC pupils on the school roll.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC whose role is set out below.
- Should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave, it is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly
- Government Guidance states that the Designated Teacher should be:

"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 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 the admission, attendance, progress, levels of attainment of any LAC and PLAC; and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations
- In accordance with the DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions for maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England (2017) Headteachers 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 student's SEN. (Where a student has an EHC plan, schools should consider requesting an early annual review or interim/emergency review).
- Report on the progress, attendance and exclusions of LAC and PLAC to all parties (Social Worker, Newham Virtual School and Carers), termly via PEP meetings, and at any other time if there are concerns.
- Ensure all staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

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

- Supporting the Headteacher, 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 school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, supporting 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 students
 - Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other students
 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
 - The destinations of students who leave the school

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

Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

The role of the Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children for the school will include:

Induction

- Ensure the school provides a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer by planning for transition in consultation with the social worker to ensure their individual needs are identified and met.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.

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. For details on how to complete a PEP please refer to the: *DfE statutory guidance (2018) - The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children*
- [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.pdf](#)

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.

Monitor, track and review progress

- Ensure that attendance is monitored; and to intervene, if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy.
- 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 student Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the student is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.

Transition

- Be proactive in supporting transition and planning when LAC and PLAC are moving between key stages and when moving schools.

Record keeping

- 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 that 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

- Ensure confidentiality and that sharing personal information is on a need to know basis.

Training

- 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.
- Ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by LAC and PLAC. Staff should be aware of the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.

Governing Body

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

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.
- Support positive working relationships in partnership with parents/carers, social care and Newham Virtual School in PEP and Care Plan review meetings.
- 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.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to 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 students.

- 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.