



Co-op Academy  
Swinton

# LAC and PLAC Policy

Version | January 2020

# Introduction

## Objectives:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of children in public care.

## Definition of a Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child:

There are many children who are cared for by adults who are not their biological parents eg. Aunts, Grandparents. This alone does not mean that they are classed as a Looked after Child (LAC)

In order to be classed as an LAC a child must be subject to a care order. A care order may be full or interim (an interim care order is sometimes placed on a child as a temporary measure until a full care order is completed).

Parents retain primary parental responsibility although the Local Authority has responsibilities as a corporate parent.

Previously looked after children are those who immediately after being in care became subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

## Children who are accommodated:

The Local Authority has a duty to provide accommodation for children in need under Part 3 of the Children Act.

This may be arranged with friends or relatives, in foster care or another suitable place. When children are accommodated, their parents retain full parental responsibility and can take their children home at any time.

## Children who are 'in care':

The only route into care of the Local Authority is by a court order made to safeguard children who are or likely to be at risk of significant harm. This specifically includes impairment of physical or mental health, impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development, sexual abuse and forms of mistreatment that are not physical. In such cases where the harm can be attributed to a failure in parental care, or the child being beyond parental control, the Local Authority (or the NSPCC) may appeal for a care or supervision order.

Children on a care order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives
- With parents - under the supervision of the Community and
- Social Services Directorate (CSSD)

The policy is informed by the following Department for Education (DfE) document:

- The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683561/The\\_designated\\_teacher\\_for\\_looked-after\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf) (DfE February 2018)

The Governing Body of Co-op Academy Swinton is committed to providing high quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises the need to champion performance, for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and is committed to improving outcomes for them.

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that LAC and PLAC are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

1. A Designated Governor for LAC and PLAC
2. A Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC
3. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all LAC
4. The Designated Teacher, as a minimum, will have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of LAC and PLAC.
5. All staff in school will have a clear understanding of the issues that affect LAC and PLAC; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality.
6. Policies, procedures and strategies to promote the achievement and well-being of this vulnerable group.

## The role of the designated teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children:

The designated Safeguard Lead Teacher with responsibility for LAC is:  
Sarah Withers, Deputy Head teacher

The member of staff that deals with day-to-day issues of LAC is:  
Lawrence Duke (Operational LAC Lead)

Lawrence Duke is responsible for completion of Personal Educational Plans (PEP) and he will attend statutory review meetings. He will also liaise with Social Services, carers and other agencies where necessary.

In Mr Duke's absence, Year Managers will complete the PEP and attend LAC reviews

Year 7: Mrs Mooney

Year 8: Mrs M Howarth

Year 9: Mrs M Howarth

Year 10: Mr C Bowcott

Year 11: Mr C Bowcott

1. The designated teacher is the central point of initial contact within Co-op Academy Swinton is Miss Sarah Withers (Deputy Headteacher). They ensure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
2. The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every LAC and PLAC on the school's roll. This involves, working with the Virtual School Team to promote the education of LAC and PLAC and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of these children matter and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
3. Where elements of the role are shared between the Designated Teacher and the Operational LAC Leads, the Designated Teacher will ensure that the responsibilities of each person are made clear within school and beyond, and that effective communication between the roles takes place.
4. The designated teacher takes lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how LAC and PLAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students.
5. The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC by contributing to the development and review of whole school policies.
6. The designated teacher promotes a culture in which LAC and PLAC:
  - Are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken

seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.

- Are prioritised in any selection of students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support.
  - Are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system.
  - Believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
7. The designated teacher is a source of advice for teachers about: differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual students who are LAC or PLAC; and the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of LAC and PLAC, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.
  8. The designated teacher works directly with LAC and PLAC and their carers, parents or guardians to: promote good home-school links; support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication; ensure they understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home; ensure they are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and encourages high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
  9. The designated teacher has lead responsibility for the development and implementation of PEPs for LAC within school in partnership with others as necessary;
  10. The designated teacher is responsible for ensuring that the PEPs are completed within statutory timescales and a copy is returned to the Virtual School Team as outlined in the PEP guidance.
  11. The designated teacher should ensure that the school spends the allocated Pupil Premium Plus Grant for the benefit of the LAC and PLAC cohort and can account for the impact of this Grant on the outcomes of the cohort.
  12. The designated teacher works closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding LAC and PLAC are quickly and effectively responded to.
  13. The designated teacher is aware that the Virtual School Team can provide information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of PLAC. The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and must gain authorisation from parents to discuss their child with the Virtual School Team for advice on meeting their individual needs.

## Roles and responsibilities of all staff:

All staff in this academy will:

- Have high expectations of LAC and PLAC's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- Understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- Appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;

- For PLAC, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

## Roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body:

The Governing Body of this academy will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC and PLAC;
- Ensure that there is a named designated teacher for LAC and PLAC;
- Ensure that the school has a policy outlining how they plan to spend the Pupil Premium Plus Grant for LAC and PLAC, including plans for any pooling of the funding;
- Through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its LAC and PLAC (including how the Pupil Premium Plus is used) and their level of progress;
- Be aware of whether the school has LAC and PLAC and how many (no names);
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that the designated teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to LAC and PLAC;
- Ensure the designated teacher is able to access training needed to fulfil the role of designated teacher. Most Virtual School Heads agree that, as minimum, designated teachers should have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of LAC and PLAC;
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of LAC and PLAC are met;
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

## Responsibilities of the Academy:

The Academy should:

- Respect confidentiality of children in public care and ensure that any information is shared strictly on a need to know basis
- Be aware of and deal appropriately with any bullying issues in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy
- Ensure Carers & Social Workers are notified of absences as soon as reported by teachers and form tutors
- Ensure that children with special educational needs are being assessed and are appropriately supported
- Consider how it can offer extra academic and pastoral support if needed
- Ensure that behaviour management policies recognise and make suitable provision for the needs and difficulties of children in public care

## Admission arrangements for Looked After Children:

On admission, records will be requested from the students' previous school.

A meeting will be held with the students' Carer and/or Social Worker to complete baseline information to update the students' Personal Educational Plan and clarify contact arrangements. Appropriate school induction will take place.

## Assessment monitoring and review procedures:

It is a legal requirement that each looked after child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP). This will identify specific areas of concern and achievable targets. Factors for consideration will include:

- Factors affecting educational progress such as changes in school placement, care placement, social worker, etc.

- Short and long term educational targets
- Consultation with the young person
- The 'corporate parent' ie. identification of all agencies involved

### **Involving the young person:**

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. This should be done sensitively and by someone who has established a relationship with the young person. The CP/LAC Officer or the Year Manager should be responsible for either discussing this with the student or if this is not appropriate ensuring that the nominated teacher has done this. The ideal time to do this would be whilst completing the Personal Education Plan.

### **Communication with other agencies:**

When a child enters public care the social worker will inform the school and Local Authority. The social worker is responsible for initiating a Personal Education Plan in partnership with the child, school, parent and/ or relevant family member and any other person that may be relevant e.g. Educational psychologist, SEN department etc.

The school should ensure that copies of all reports are forwarded to the young person's social worker in addition to the foster carer or residential social worker.

Social Services are responsible for ensuring that an annual statutory review takes place. In some cases the school may be asked to organise such meetings. Schools, LA, Social Services and any other relevant agencies should be invited to attend the child's annual review meeting.

At the meeting the child's progress and any other issues should be discussed and targets set. A copy of the minutes should be forwarded to the agencies involved.

### **Personal Education Plans (PEPS):**

It is a statutory requirement that a Looked After Child has a Personal Education Plan, which is updated at least annually. The PEP should be specifically designed for the individual child and should involve the child in its completion. Different Local Authorities use different PEP formats but they should essentially contain the same information.

### **Looked after children from other authorities:**

The Local Authority where a child is placed under a care order is usually held responsible for the child's welfare. They should ensure that the child is well-cared for and that their educational needs are met. They should also be the professionals that organise statutory review meetings and the completion of PEPs.

This policy was established, and approved for implementation by the full Governing Body:

Signed by the Chair of Governors:
Dated:
The name of our appointed Designated Governor is: Mr Andrew Hay
The name of our school's Designated Teacher is: Miss Sarah Withers
This policy is to be next reviewed on: January 2021