

Park Hill Primary School

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy



Approval Level	Governing Board
Date Reviewed	19.09.24
Approved On	19.09.24
Category	Non-statutory
Next Review Date	Advised annually – Sept 25
Policy Availability	School website
Person Responsible	Mrs C Watson

Policy Version Control

Date of Change	Details of Change
Sept 2022	Change of Chair of Governors
Sept 2024	Name change to SENDCo (page 5) Updates to legal framework (page 5) Addition of section 'Pupils with SEND' (pages 9 and 10)

Contents

Statement of Intent.....	3
Legal Framework	4
Key Personnel in Relation to this Policy	4
Roles and Responsibilities	5
<i>Governing Board</i>	5
<i>Head Teacher</i>	5
<i>Designated Teacher</i>	5
<i>Staff</i>	6

Definitions	7
<u>Looked After Children (LAC)</u>	7
<u>Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)</u>	7
Admissions.....	7
Virtual School.....	7
Personal Education Plan (PEP).....	8
Pupil Premium Plus (PPP).....	9
Exclusions.....	9
Confidentiality.....	9
Links with Other Agencies	10

Statement of Intent

Park Hill Primary School recognises that Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting. We are committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas.

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. When children are exposed to these adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their learning, as well as on their ability to think and to interact with others.

Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, national progress and attainment data clearly shows that LAC and PLAC are at greater risk of exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Park Hill Primary School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every LAC and PLAC can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that LAC can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

School can be a source of stability for children who may have been subject to emotional distress and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and thrive. We are therefore committed to:

- Encouraging pupils to reach their potential and make good progress, in relation to their social and emotional development.
- Ensuring that pupils enjoy high-quality teaching and a curriculum that meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Planning support for LAC realistically and using the school’s resources efficiently to meet their needs.
- Promoting a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Helping pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) ‘Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children’
- DfE (2018) ‘The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children’
- DfE (2023) ‘Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement’
- DfE (2023) ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’
- DfE (2024) ‘Keeping children safe in education’

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Key Personnel in Relation to this Policy

Name	Role(s)
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Mrs L Lohan	Chair of Governors
Mrs C. Logan	Head Teacher Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mrs C Watson	Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
Mrs C Watson	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo)

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board: the Governing Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance for LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the Local Authority.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing reports produced by the Senior Leadership Team to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.

Head Teacher: the Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board on the number of LAC and PLAC in the school, as well as their attendance, progress and behaviour.
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC and PLAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring Pupil Premium Plus funding for PLAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC and PLAC.

Designated Teacher: the Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the Virtual School Head understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the Local Authority.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Leading on how the child's Personal Education Plan is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENDCo to ensure all pupils' needs are met.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's Virtual School Head and social worker to develop and implement their Personal Education Plan.
- Working with the Virtual School Head to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their Personal Education Plan.
- Monitoring the progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Being aware that many LAC and PLAC say they are bullied, so actively monitoring and preventing bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Attending training as required and keeping fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding LAC.

Staff: all staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the impact of trauma (including abuse, neglect, loss and separation) on children's development and their ability to build relationships, and how this might affect their behaviour.
- Having high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC and working to ensure they achieve stability and success at school.
- Understanding how important it is to see LAC and PLAC children as individuals and not publicly treating them differently from their peers.
- Showing sensitivity about who else knows about their LAC or PLAC status.
- Using effective classroom strategies to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC and being aware that some curriculum content may trigger difficult emotions.
- Keeping the Designated Teacher informed about LAC and PLAC children's progress.
- Responding promptly to requests for information and discussing any concerns about barriers to learning (including bullying).
- Appreciating the central importance of the LAC Personal Education Plan 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.
- Engaging with relevant training that is offered to enable them to work effectively with LAC and PLAC.

Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC)

“Looked-after children (LAC)” are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children’s residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the Local Authority has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the Local Authority under an agreement with their parents.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

“Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Admissions

Park Hill Primary School welcomes all LAC and PLAC.

All LAC and PLAC should have the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The school recognises that LAC and PLAC will be prioritised in our oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Due to care placement changes, LAC children may enter the school mid-term. It is vital that these students are given a positive welcome. If necessary, they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

Virtual School

The Virtual School provides advice, guidance and support to children who are looked after by Sandwell Council and wherever they are placed.

The virtual school does not replace the school or educational provision of a looked after child - it is an additional resource which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of looked after children.

The virtual school provides access to a multidisciplinary team through strong links with the many individuals, teams, schools and agencies that are involved in supporting the education of looked after children. From September 2018 the Virtual School Head

(VSH) has an additional role to offer advice and guidance to previously looked after children and young people.

The team consists of a VSH, Operations Manager, Advisory Teacher, four Engagement and Education Officers and an Administrator.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the Local Authority, Designated Teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The Virtual School Head and the Designated Teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or P-LAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of Pupil Premium Plus funding to improve their attainment.

Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

A PEP will be initiated within 20 school days of the LAC starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary (at least termly and within 6 months of the previous PEP).

The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns, ensure appropriate support is in place and set SMART targets. The child should be involved in their PEP by attending the meeting and/or sharing their views or in another way (e.g. gathered by the DT before the meeting).

We have robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are reflected in the PEP and addressed through the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) framework as soon as possible.

Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)

PPP for LAC will be delegated to schools by the relevant virtual school. We will allocate the Pupil Premium Plus funding (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.

Pupils with SEND

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.

The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that LAC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

Exclusions

Park Hill Primary School recognises that LAC and PLAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions.

Where a LAC or PLAC is at risk of exclusion, the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. Consultation with social workers, the Virtual School and other relevant parties will be important in identifying strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

If an exclusion is unavoidable, the reintegration meeting should consider all possible measures and resources that provide support and prevent further exclusions.

Confidentiality

Many LAC or PLAC do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel different. We will maintain and respect the child's confidentiality in consultation with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties.

Once this has been agreed, complete confidentiality is to be maintained and information on LAC will be shared with school staff on a “need to know” basis.

All staff will do their utmost to maintain the child’s confidentiality e.g. avoiding reference to their care status/PEP meetings in front of their peers

Links with Other Agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with LAC and PLAC, such as:

- Social care teams
- The Virtual School
- Inclusion Support
- Health Services, including CAMHS
- Youth Offending Teams