



DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

**SCHOOL POLICY FOR
LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
(LAC/ PLAC)**

Approved by CSWP on 9 November 2023

Drayton Manor High School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of students in public care.

Designated Teacher for LAC: Colleen Guitane (Assistant Head, Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Governor with responsibility for LAC: Jonathan Eva

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in 'The Children Act 2004' and the statutory guidance 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children 2015', (updated 2018) We recognise that the school and teachers are at the very heart of this process to ensure we provide a world class education. We are highly ambitious for these students and knowing that securing the best possible progress for them will greatly enhance their life chances.

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC/PLAC as for all children
- Ensure that all LAC/PLAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- Ensure that LAC/ PLAC students take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- Ensure that carers and social workers of LAC/PLAC students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- Ensure that LAC/PLAC students are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

See Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

1. Statutory Framework

Looked After Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care and provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term '**in care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be '**Looked After Children**' – LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Previously Looked After Children

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).

Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 place duties on the governing body of a maintained school in England and the proprietor of an academy in England to:

- designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after pupils who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training

2. Links to other Policies

The following policies may also be relevant to the Looked After Children Policy:

- Safeguarding
- Admissions

3. Admissions

(see school Admission Policy)

4. Inclusion

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC/PLAC students.

5. Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC/PLAC meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

6. Monitoring the progress of LAC/PLAC

The social worker for LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP – within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all students at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

7. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

All LAC should have a PEP which is part of the child's care plan or detention placement plan. The broad areas of information that must be covered in the PEP and are specified in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 as amended. The PEP must now include the contact details of the Virtual School Head for the LA that looks after the child. The designated teacher along with the Head of Year leads on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the pupil's progress is monitored. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for LAC to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential.

This includes:

- On-going catch up support for those who have fallen behind with school work.
- Provision of immediate suitable support if a student is not in school.
- Transition support where needed
- Support to enable the child to meet short and long term academic achievements and aspirations and to achieve expected levels of progress

- Careers advice and guidance
- Out of school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests
- Financial help to ensure equality of access to extra-curricular provision and activities

8. Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who are the LAC/PLAC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC/PLAC from other authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC/PLAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

9. Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC/PLAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC/PLAC

10. Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC/PLAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

11. Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC/PLAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC/PLAC:

- LAC teams
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service
- Virtual Head

LAC policy review and evaluation

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.

APPENDIX 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities

Looked After Children – LAC – are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under achievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Underachievement in further and higher education

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect.

The Designated Teacher will

- Be an advocate for LAC/PLAC within school
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC/PLAC on both the LAC/PLAC and the rest of the school community
- Know who are all the LAC/PLAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about LAC/PLAC
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC/PLAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate
- Ensure that LAC/PLAC receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new student settle
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student

- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC/PLAC
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for LAC/PLAC
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC/PLAC transfers to another educational placement
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required
- Report to the Governing Body on LAC/PLAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- Prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
 - The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP
 - The number of PLAC on roll
 - Their attendance compared to other students
 - Their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other students
 - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
 - The destinations of students who leave the school
- Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC/PLAC
- Arrange a mentor (if appropriate) (adult and/or student) to whom the student can talk,
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) than the general school population.

Good practice suggests that all school staff will

- Follow school procedures
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC and PLAC's progress
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC/PLAC
- Positively promote the raising of an LAC's and PLAC's self esteem
- Ensure any LAC/PLAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC/PLAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC/PLAC is experiencing difficulties
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/student as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports available when required

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC/PLAC
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC
- Liaise with the Head, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC/PLAC are met
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC/PLAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC/PLAC equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to School
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - Out of school learning and extra curricular activities
 - Work experience and careers guidance
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC/PLAC

London Borough of Ealing will

- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC/PLAC
- Ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other London Borough of Ealing student
- Ensure that every LAC has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Ealing from another authority
- Make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer
- Identify a designated officer who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC/PLAC
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of LAC/PLAC and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs