

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (PLAC) POLICY

Term of Policy: Annual

Approved by: LGB 24.6.26

Date ratified: BoT 7.7.26

Next Review Date: Summer 2027

Author: Sue Rockell

Sources: NGA; The Key

Online location: Policies

Consulted with JCC? Yes ☐ No ☒

Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations.

As part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, we have carefully considered the impact of this policy on equality. The School will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all employees and does not have a negative impact on students or staff with protected characteristics, race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Designated LAC & PLAC Teacher: Ms Sue Rockell

Governors: Mr Dave Parker & Mr Taposh Rahman

For support and advice: Harrow Children Services

Aims

Many LAC (Looked After Children) & PLAC (Previously Looked After) will have experienced disrupted schooling and gaps in learning. In addition, a significant proportion of LAC & PLAC have some form of Special Educational Need and/or have been excluded from school.

We will support the Government's agenda for giving all LAC's the same life chances as any other child, in that we want them to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and achieve economic well-being.

At Rooks Heath School, we will address this by:

- providing a safe environment for all LAC & PLAC, where their educational experience is valued, high aspirations are encouraged and belief in the potential of all children is held.
- Ensuring that all LAC & PLAC are provided with, and have access to, support to enable them to have every opportunity to enjoy, learn and achieve in line with their peers.
- Ensuring that our policies and procedures for LAC & PLAC meet the requirements outlined within *'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children, Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, DfE February 2018.'*

Definitions

Children Looked After (CLA) or Children in Care (LAC) refers to a child 'looked-after by a local authority' as outlined by section 22 *Children Act 1989*.

LAC are children who are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours and include children who are

- living with foster parents
- living in a residential children's home or
- living in residential settings like schools or secure units

Children Previously in Care (PLAC) refers to children who are;

'...no longer looked after in England and Wales because she/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any persons, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales,'

Responsibilities

The Governors

The Governors have appointed **Mr Dave Parker & Mr Taposh** Rahman as the named Safeguarding Governors responsible for championing the needs of LAC & PLAC at every level throughout Rooks Heath School.

The named Governors will ensure that:

- The needs of LAC & PLAC are considered, reflected and supported within all relevant school policies.
- Governors and Senior Leadership are aware of the legal responsibilities and guidance in regards LAC & PLAC in education.
- Our admissions practices continue to give LAC & PLAC the highest priority admission to the school, as outlined within '*School Admissions' DfE guidance 2014*.
- The annual LAC & PLAC monitoring report is scrutinised to ensure that the academic progress of LAC & PLAC students is effectively being tracked and challenged.
- Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) spending is scrutinised ensuring that is used appropriately and effectively.
- Resources are available to address the needs specific LAC & PLAC, and that disparity in academic progress in comparison to their peers within school, including patterns in attendance and suspension and provision for most able students are highlighted and swiftly addressed.
- An appropriate member of staff is appointed as Designated Teacher, who has access to training and resources (including time) to undertake their responsibilities and has the seniority to influence Rooks Heath School Senior Leadership, to meet and champion the needs of throughout the school.
- All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC & PLAC.

The Head Teacher

Is responsible for ensuring that:

- The role of the Designated Teacher (DT) is filled by an appropriate member of staff at all times (including arrangements to allow for staff absences and resignation). The DT should have the seniority to work with Senior Leadership, Governors and all staff to provide information, advice and champion the achievement and needs of LAC & PLAC students.
- The DT is provided with the time to fulfil their role and completes the LA Statutory Designated Teacher Training every two years as well as any other training to assist with the fulfilment of their duties.
- Policies and procedures to monitor and address the needs of, and support for LAC & PLAC students are in place and adhered to, with reference to academic progress, admissions, attendance, safeguarding and suspensions, and that swift action is taken when concerns arise.
- Rooks Heath school reports on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children to Governors, the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Local Authority as required.
- Rooks Heath School works proactively with the Local Authority to provide support and address the needs of LAC & PLAC.
- All school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities in regard to LAC & PLAC as detailed within this policy and related guidance.
- LAC Pupil Premium is used 'to the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- All staff are aware of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' guidance, particularly in relation to

vulnerable groups and their propensity towards being both the victims and perpetrator of Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse.

- The Local Authority (Social Workers and the Virtual School) are informed of the suspensions from school of any LAC.
- An Anti-bullying Policy is in place and stringently followed which recognises that a significant proportion of LAC have experienced bullying at some point.
- The suspension of LAC & PLAC is avoided, alternatives to suspensions are considered and additional support is put in place to support those pupils at risk of suspension.
- LAC & PLAC are encouraged and supported to continue engaging and achieving post 16.
- Information in regard to LAC & PLAC is treated confidentially, but also provided swiftly to relevant agencies and new schools.
- That LAC & PLAC students moving into Sixth Form automatically receive their vulnerable group Allowance/Bursary and that education is included within their pathway plan.
- The SENCO is aware of those LAC & PLAC children in school, works closely with the DT and prioritises their access to additional support both internally and externally (including EP assessment).

The Designated Teacher (DT) for LAC & PLAC

The Designated Teacher is responsible for and committed to championing the needs and attainment of LAC & PLAC students (up to the age of 18), in an effort to bridge the gap and raise their attainment so that it is in-line with their peers.

The DT is a qualified teacher and “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.”

The designated teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that PEP's for LAC are accurate, effective, relevant and completed within the identified timescales with the child, social worker, carers and any other relevant professionals.
- PEP's for LAC children with EHCP's complement rather than mirror the EHCP.
- Advising relevant staff of PEP targets, making sure that staff work with students to meet their targets.
- Ensuring that the Pupil Premium for LAC is used appropriately to support the child in meeting targets outlined within the PEP.

All staff

- Have high expectations in regard to the achievement of LAC & PLAC students.
- Ensure that the individual needs of LAC & PLAC are met through quality, differentiated teaching.
- Are aware that LAC & PLAC have high rates of SEN and flag concerns regarding learning with the SENCO and DT.
- Are aware of the specific needs of LAC & PLAC in relation to Attachment and Trauma and make appropriate adjustment to teaching and classroom management to meet these needs.
- Are aware of the prevalence of LAC & PLAC mental health needs, and flag concerns to the DT and Mental Health lead.
- Work proactively with the DT to ensure that LAC & PLAC meet their targets and achieve, highlighting any barriers to learning, and inclusion at the earliest opportunity.

- Work to ensure the Inclusion of LAC & PLAC within the School community, maintaining their confidentiality while also providing support with raising their self-esteem, and supporting their relationships with peers in line with the Anti Bullying Policy.

PLAC

The experiences and outcomes of PLAC can be very similar to those of LAC. PLAC educational needs are unlikely to have changed just because their care status has. To address this, the needs of LAC and PLAC are prioritised and addressed in a similar way. The progress of PLAC students is reviewed termly and we work proactively with parents, carers and other professionals to address any areas of concern and put in place support as appropriate.

Parents and Carers of PLAC are encouraged to identify their child's previously looked after status on entry to the school and are required to produce documentation to support this. Any information will be treated confidentially.

LAC & PLAC students receive a similar level of support from the school. The attainment of PLAC students is monitored on a termly basis by the Designated Teacher and funding for additional support (over and above the support available for any other student) is funded by the annual PP.

Concerns regarding the progress of PLAC students are highlighted to parents, carers and the Virtual School (with parental consent) in a timely fashion so that support can be put in place swiftly. Parents/Guardians are directed to the Adoption Fund via LA Social Work assessment where necessary.

Admissions (See Admissions Policy for detail)

Rooks Heath School acknowledges and ensures that LAC & PLAC students are given priority for School Admissions as outlined in *DFE School Admissions Code Guidance 2014*. We work collaboratively with the Virtual School regarding any concerns that we might have in relation to the admission of LAC & PLAC students. The Designated Teacher attends LAC & PLAC admissions meetings and works closely alongside the Virtual School, Social Worker, Carers and any other professionals to ensure that students feel supported and have a successful smooth transition in to school life.

Inclusion

LAC & PLAC students are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life. Through effective communication with carers, professionals and staff, as well as the appropriate use of pupil premium and the PPG, we work to remove the barriers to LAC & PLAC students having robust, enjoyable and valuable school experience.

The experiences of LAC & PLAC have resulted in disproportionate levels of Special Educational Needs within these groups. Nationally 70% of LAC have some form of SEN. In acknowledgement of this, individual attainment is monitored closely by the Designated Teacher via the PEP process and any concerns are identified and highlighted to the SENCO and Virtual School. Concerns raised by Carers, Social Workers and the Virtual School are welcomed and swiftly acted upon. Where it is felt that further assessment may be needed, LAC & PLAC access to the SEN assessment process and interventions are prioritised.

A significant proportion of LAC (and therefore PLAC) have undiagnosed Speech and Language needs which impacts on educational outcomes. In recognition of this, all LAC & PLAC (with the consent of parents & carers) are screened on entry for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. The outcome of LAC

screening is communicated to the Virtual School and areas of concern are addressed swiftly with in-school support. Significant or continuing concerns are referred to specialist support from Speech and Language services.

Pupil Premium Grant & Pupil Premium Plus

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

A Pupil Premium Grant is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that students meet the targets outlined within their PEP. In line with Local Authority policy, pupil premium for each LAC is used to support:

- Academic achievement and progress.
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented.
- Attendance.
- Inclusion (by reducing internal and external suspensions).
- Social skills.
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider

In instances where further funding is needed for support, advice from the Virtual School will be sought.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

While the PP+ for PLAC is not a 'personal budget,' should a PLAC require support over and above that which is provided for any other pupil, the PP+ will be used to fund this.

PP+ for PLAC is also 'pooled' and used to provide additional support and services to raise the attainment of PLAC within school as outlined by our online Pupil Premium Strategy Statement and as part of a 3-year Pupil Premium Strategy, for instance:

- Attachment Training for all staff
- Purchasing LAC SALT screening tool to use with PLAC students who start school.
- One to one tuition
- Mentoring programmes

Attendance (*See Attendance Policy for detail*)

The attendance of LAC & PLAC is carefully monitored and reported daily to Welfare Call. Carers and Parents of LAC & PLAC will be contacted regarding unauthorised absences daily. Concerns regarding attendance, including identified patterns of absence, will be raised with parents, carers, social workers and professionals.

Suspensions/Exclusions

LAC and PLAC have disproportionally high levels of suspensions/exclusions from schools nationally, placing them at a further educational disadvantage.

In line with Local Authority and DfE Guidance, Rooks Heath do not take the decision to permanently exclude LAC & PLAC easily and will only make this decision once all other strategies have been exhausted. In addition, we work closely with the Local Authority to avoid the fixed term suspensions of both groups.

[Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance September 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Advice and support from the Local Authority (Social workers, the Virtual School or the Permanence Educational Support Officer) will be sought where it is felt that a LAC & PLAC may become at risk of suspension/permanent exclusion. Support and alternatives to suspensions/exclusions will be considered.

Alternatives to exclusion may include:

- SLT Supervisions
- Restorative Justice
- Managed Moves (through the Headteacher of the Virtual School)
- CAMHs support
- Additional therapeutic intervention via the Adoption Fund (PLAC only)

Where a fixed term suspension of a LAC is unavoidable, parents/carers and the Virtual School will be contacted prior to the student leaving the school site and work will be provided to avoid further gaps in education. Plans and support will be put in place to avoid further suspension on the child's return to school.

Other Relevant School Policies

Admissions

Anti-Bullying

Attendance

Behaviour Policy

Rooks Heath School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.