

# Unity Academy



## LAC / Post LAC Procedure

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## **Procedure for Looked After Children and Post Looked After Children**

Looked After Children (LAC) are children who have been accommodated either voluntarily or compulsorily or are on Care Orders. They may be living at home, with members of their extended family, with foster carers or in a residential children's home or remanded in custody or in a secure detention centre. The local authority is their "corporate parent". (See glossary for full definitions). They are eligible for LAC Pupil Premium funding.

Post-LAC are children who have left care and now subject to an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement order and are eligible for Post-LAC Pupil Premium. These are collectively referred to as Post-LAC. Children who ceased to be Looked After, and returned to the care of their parent, but are not on an order are not eligible for Post-LAC Pupil Premium.

The Rivers CofE Academy Trust and Unity Academy are committed to providing a high quality education for all of its children including LAC and Post-LAC. We recognise that more vulnerable children may need access to additional support, mentoring and advocacy to enable equality of access, opportunity and success. We are committed to providing an inclusive ethos in an atmosphere of mutual respect, where all children's needs are identified, understood and responded to sensitively and effectively. We aim to overcome any barriers to learning for LAC/Post-LAC and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, understanding that they have control over their destiny and education *does* matter. We will listen to what looked after children/previously looked after children tell us they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised.

We consider Articles 3, 16, 25 and 39 from 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' as the most relevant articles (although not exclusive) to consider in respect of 'Looked After Children/Post-LAC'

**Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.**

**Article 16: Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life.**

**Article 25: If a child has been placed away from home (in care, custody, hospital for example), they have a right to a regular check of their treatment and conditions of care.**

**Article 39: Children neglected, abused, exploited, tortured or who are victims of war must receive special help to help them recover their health, dignity and self-respect**

Unity Academy believes that as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of looked after children. These are children who are looked after by the Local Authority. We also have a duty to safeguard and promote the education of previously looked after children. This Policy has been produced to take account of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board's strategy, Worcestershire Virtual School for LAC and National Government Strategies for LAC/Post-LAC.

## **Aim**

To provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in and promotes the abilities and potential of **all** children.

To bring the educational attainments of our LAC/Post-LAC nearer to those of their peers.

Identifying our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our looked after children. Asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

### **In pursuit of this aim we will:**

Nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Post-Looked After Children who will:

- act as their advocate and co-ordinate support
- liaise with LACES to ensure every child is receiving 25 hours of education per week, and to ensure additional support is available if required

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### The Rivers CofE Academy Trust will:

- Actively support and promote the education of Looked After Children and Post Looked After Children
- Celebrate the achievements of LAC/Post-LAC
- Consider an annual report from the designated teacher
- ensure the Head teacher and senior leadership team acts on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
  - The school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of LAC/Post-LAC on roll
  - The school's policies are reflecting the needs of LAC/Post-LAC
  - Resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of LAC/Post-LAC

### The Head Teacher will:

- In partnership with the The Rivers CofE Academy Trust, ensure that the designated teacher has opportunity to acquire and keep up to date with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding of looked after children
- To make sure the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked after children/previously looked after children to achieve
- Oversee the development of policy
- Ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses that help them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to support looked after children/previously looked after children

### The Designated Teacher will:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for all pupils and promote achievement of LAC/Post-LAC
- Act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health to ensure effective communication between all agencies and partners
- Organise a termly PEP meeting as directed by the virtual school
- Ensure that there is a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each LAC child to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child's Social Services Care Plan and form part of any other school plan. E.g. Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme. It should be reviewed termly through a PEP review meeting.

- Ensure that Social Services Reviews on each child are attended if necessary and/or always prepare a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Ensure that they participate in joint training.
- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is requested at the outset.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when LAC/Post-LAC are underachieving and early intervention strategies are put in place, and that the named contact in the LACES team is informed.
- Refer any attendance concerns to the LACES Team Education Welfare/Liaison Officer, and supply attendance data as required.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about LAC/Post-LAC and help them understand the things which can affect how they learn and achieve
- Ensure carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- Ensure that LAC/Post-LAC are listened to, they have a voice in setting their own targets and have access to support and counselling and mentor in school as required
- Promote good home-school links and establish a working relationship with the family
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put LAC/Post-LAC at a disadvantage

#### The role of those involved in supporting LAC/Post-LAC:

- Ensure they all are made to feel welcome and included
- Have high expectations of children's involvement in learning and educational progress
- Be aware of the emotional and social effects of loss and separation from birth families
- Understand the reason which may be behind a child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children
- Understand how important it is to see LAC/Post-LAC as individuals and not publicly treat them differently from their peers
- Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's status
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age the understanding the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential

#### **Personal Education Plans**

All looked after children have to have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority that looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the LA have a shared responsibility for making sure the PEP is a useful document and for helping looked after children achieve and enjoy. Discussion about how together they can make that happen should be done through a meeting involving the young person, carers the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate staff from LACES Virtual School for Looked after Children. If the young person has an Education Health and Care plan this should be reviewed annually and should where possible, tie in with the PEP.

All PEPs are now done via an online system.

#### **Additional Funding**

Looked after children are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. The school is committed to ensuring the dedicated funding where available for all eligible looked after children on roll provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan. Post-Looked After Children are eligible for Post-LAC Pupil premium funding. This is allocated directly to, and managed by, their school for the benefit of eligible pupils in the school. It is not a personal budget for individual children, however it may be considered to support specific needs.

## **Admission and Induction Arrangements**

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LA's admission criteria. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. On admission records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records have been received a meeting will be held with the parent/carer, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan (PEP). This meeting will ensure communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to make the statutory time scales for PEPs as outline in guidance.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as home/school liaison book to detail any sudden changes in the child's circumstances). Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their status because it makes them feel different. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However we recognise that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

## **School Trips and Special Activities**

We aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy as many extra opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting, if in doubt we will always send the consent slip to the social worker.

## **Leaving Arrangements**

If a looked after child has to leave the school we will ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school. Transition to secondary school will be carefully planned and tailored for the child.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The designated teacher will prepare a termly report, as required, on the achievements and current status of the school's LAC/Post-LAC. This will include, where age appropriate: NC results and attainment, attendance figures, exclusion issues, changes in home placements, reviews and interventions to raise achievement.
- The report should include intervention strategies such as study support, learning mentor support, home school contracts, Pastoral Support Plans, counselling support, etc.
- The report should also include information about non-academic progress in extra curricular activities.

## **Legal framework**

In February 2018 the Department for education issued 2 new statutory guidance documents: Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children 2018 and The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children – these documents describe the requirements for the designated teacher for looked After Children and previously Looked After Children and the support available via Virtual Schools and the Post-LAC premium

## Glossary

**Care Orders:** made by the courts in respect of a child who has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm”. A care order results in the local authority assuming parental responsibility for a child. A child’s Care Plan will detail the way roles and tasks concerning their education will be shared.

**Core Group**– Key professionals who support the LAC (usually Health, Education, Social Services)

**LAC Looked After Child** these are children who are the subject of an interim (Section 38) or full (Section 31) care order or a protection order (Section 44 and 46) and those who are accommodated by local authorities with the agreement of their parents (Section 20). It also includes children who are compulsorily accommodated, remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (Section 21)

**Post-LAC** – these are children that have previously been LAC but have now left the care system through one of the following routes: subject to an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship order, Child Arrangements order (specific to residency-living with)

**PEP Personal Education Plan** - every child and young person in care should have a PEP which sets out academic achievement; identifies developmental and educational needs; and sets out short and long-term targets and plans. The PEP should be part of the child’s Care Plan. It also forms part of a pupil’s curricular record which the governing body has a duty to keep in respect of each registered pupil.

**Pastoral support programme:** a short practical intervention to provide support when a young person is at risk of disaffection. Initiated by the school but should be agreed with parents/carers and involve the LA and other agencies such as social services.

**Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP):** a statutory plan which is written to include services and support for those children who have the most complex learning needs. Parents, school or outside agencies can refer for such a plan – where the needs of the child are not being met by the support and resources already in place.