



# Oldbury Park Primary


## RSA ACADEMY

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## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

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Recommended by: DSL  
Recommendation Date: February 2022  
Ratified by: LAGB

Signed:   
Position on the Board: Chair of LAGB  
Ratification Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022  
Next Review: March 2023  
Policy Tier: School (OP)

**OLDBURY PARK PRIMARY RSA ACADEMY**  
**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY**

**Aims of the Policy**

- To support our Looked After Children (LAC) and previously Looked After Children ensuring they are in a safe and secure environment and give them access to every opportunity to continually achieve and enjoy their learning.
- To recognise and support the specific challenges faced by LAC/PLAC (see Appendix 1), while continuing to foster a culture of high expectations of learning behaviour and progress. The Trust recognises that equality of opportunity does not mean equal provision for all, but indeed that some children, such as LAC/PLAC, need additional support in order to be given equal chance of excelling at school.

(Children with a Special Guardianship order (see Appendix 5) will also be considered as part of this policy)

**Definition**

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after if they are in the care of or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by, a local authority. The term 'Looked After Children' (LAC) refers to:

- (i) Children accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20).
- (ii) Children subject to care order (section 31.1) or interim care order (section 38).
- (iii) Children who are subject to emergency orders for the protection of the child (section 44)

A Previously Looked- After Child (PLAC) is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any other person or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

**The Trust**

- Will ensure that there is a qualified and experienced teacher named as the **Designated Teacher (DT)** for Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children, and that they are enabled to carry out their responsibilities
- Ensure that the DT has access to appropriate training and have sufficient time to carry out duties and to receive support
- Support the Executive Principal, Vice Principal, DT and other members of staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children are met, and in particular to have a **named governor for LAC/PLAC**
- Receive as a minimum an annual report from the DT (see Appendix 4)

**The Executive Principal/Head of School**

- Will ensure that the DT carries out their role to the highest possible standard, as outlined in Appendix 2
- Will ensure that all staff, led by the DT, fulfil their roles and responsibilities so that LAC/PLAC become the best they possibly can be.

**The Designated Teacher (DT)**

- Will ensure that all staff are fully aware and up to date with information about their roles and responsibilities regarding LAC/PLAC as outlined in appendix 3

- Ensure CPD to keep staff including new staff, fully informed about LAC/PLAC

### **All Staff**

WILL ENSURE THEY KNOW AND FULFIL THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATING TO LAC/PLAC

- Be fully aware of the information relating to LAC/PLAC (Appendix 5)
- Know who LAC/PLAC are, and do all they professionally can to support LAC/PLAC

### **ALL GOVERNORS AND STAFF**

Will support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children

### **BACKGROUND (APPENDIX I)**

The Trust recognises that many Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. The possible gaps in learning, or emotional impact of experiences, may mean that they face barriers to making progress. The complexity of any fragmented educational experience needs careful assessment and planning.

We understand that all Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children will have suffered significant loss and trauma and may have experienced abuse and/or neglect. This is likely to have considerable impact on their ability to access the curriculum. Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children are prioritised in this school for additional support to manage their learning and behaviour, where needed.

We also recognise that whilst in care, some events can retrigger traumatic experiences e.g. court hearing, contact with family or friends, or an aspect of the curriculum that cannot be anticipated. This can affect behaviour and may affect progress even for pupils who had previously been settled and 'on track'. Staff working with the child will need to use additional strategies, specific to that child's needs.

### **THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN /PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOL (APPENDIX 2)**

**The role of the Designated Representative is:**

- To promote a culture in which Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children believe they can succeed and aspire to further training, education and higher education, and/or employment.
- To maintain an up to date register of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children and inform colleagues on a need to know basis. Sensitivity and confidentiality are critical.
- To attend relevant training so that they are aware of statutory responsibilities and procedures for Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implications for the school in respect of Looked After Children/ Previously Looked After Children.

- To understand the impact of trauma, loss and separation and how this can affect behaviour - including, how attachment styles can affect their learning.
- To co-ordinate/deliver training to staff (teaching and non-teaching), and governors so they are aware of the complex issues and educational disadvantage affecting many Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children and young people. To understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome any disadvantages, and the need to promote the involvement of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children in, for example: school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils.
- Report to the Governing Body annually on the performance of the Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children who are on the roll of the school (see section Responsibilities of the School Governing Body)
- To ensure all teachers know when there is a Looked After Child/ Previously Looked After Child in their class and what that child's specific needs are. This does not mean that all staff are informed about the child's Looked After/Previous Looked After status, or that they are given all details.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social care colleagues and other Children's Services professionals who support the child.
- To be the first point of contact for other professionals working with Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children and ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies. To ensure, in conjunction with the social worker, that all relevant education and care information is available at the point of admission into the school so that appropriate placement can occur. Where a child leaves the school, to ensure the passing of information is done swiftly so as to avoid admission delays with the new school – this may mean passing records via the Social Worker where appropriate. Where difficulties arise in obtaining information from a previous school, the Integrated Service for Looked After Children (ISL) Virtual School can help to obtain this information.
- To monitor the educational progress of all Looked After Children/ Previously Looked After Children in order to inform the school's development plan. To ensure that all Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children have targets which although realistic are also challenging. The targets should reflect the high expectations we hold about Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure the child, carer(s), social worker and other relevant parties receive early notification of school-based meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication, both written and verbal remains regular and positive.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, repeated or sustained absence, internal truancy or risk of exclusion.
- To identify with teachers the student's strengths and gaps in learning and any barriers to learning. This should form the basis of the PEP at every review meeting.
- To ensure the young person has an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP). If not, then to arrange the meeting in partnership with the child's social worker. The DT will ensure that the school has updated information on the child's attainment, progress and educational needs regardless of whether a PEP meeting has been arranged.

- To ensure that the actions identified in the plan are implemented and reviewed at least annually, but preferable termly.
- To facilitate the completion of the student section of the PEP.
- Ensure that someone is available to attend LAC Reviews on each child/young person and/or prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- To supervise admission of new Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children and ensure appropriate induction and transition support into school.
- It is important that each Looked After Child starts school with the correct uniform and a school planner where appropriate. Most Looked After Children do not want to be identified as different and staff will respect and support this.
- To consider wherever possible:  
That the child starts school on the same day as other children are admitted  
That they have a key worker allocated from the first day (this may be the class teacher). That they know who to speak to in the event of any difficulties that may arise.
- Ensure that each pupil in care has an identified member of staff they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but, should be based on the child's own wishes. Members of Staff who take on this role may themselves need some emotional support at times by an appropriate member of staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues any disclosures that pupils may make and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Safeguarding Team.
- Ensure that Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children play a full and active part in the life of the school and have access to extended school provision where required.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers to another school, all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school with minimal delay.
- If a Looked After Child on roll moves educational setting, the DT will advise the social worker about the likely impact of a move on the child's education and what should be done to minimise this
- To liaise with the appropriate ISL/Virtual school team member for the twice-yearly monitoring of the Looked After Child in the school.
- To contact/liaise with ISL/Virtual School if a Looked After Child in the school needs extra support and apply for funding as appropriate.
- If a Looked After Child transfers out of care, their educational needs are unlikely to have changed. The Designated Teacher will liaise with/hand over monitoring and support to the appropriate Senior Leaders in order to ensure that the child's needs continue to be met.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF (APPENDIX 3)**

The school staff will:

- Ensure any child in care/previously in care is sensitively supported and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children.
- Respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of Personal Education Plans and other documentation needed as part of the review meeting.
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- Where appropriate, and as indicated by the Designated Teacher, attend LAC Reviews as a professional with direct understanding of the child/young person's educational needs.
- Be aware of challenging behaviours that can result from trauma. Adapt behaviour management strategies in response to any challenging behaviour resulting from re-triggering of trauma and seek advice from the Designated Teacher as needed.
- Provide a supportive climate in school, enabling children in care to achieve stability.
- As a corporate parent, make additional efforts to communicate to Looked After students/Previously Looked After students your belief in their ability to achieve.

### **DESIGNATED TEACHER ANNUAL REPORT TO GOVERNORS (APPENDIX 4)**

Governors must receive as a minimum an annual report from the DT. The report should typically include:

- The number of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children in the school (both Worcestershire and from other Local Authorities).
- A clear overview of the educational needs and progress of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children in the school.
- Attendance and fixed term exclusion compared to the whole school population.
- Any SEN
- Whether any Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children are gifted or talented
- Destinations of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children who leave school.
- Ensure that school policies and procedures give Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children equal access and / or positively discriminate Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children by prioritising their needs e.g.
  - Transport support
  - Public examinations
  - Additional support
  - Curriculum planning
  - Extra-curricular activities
  - Work experience and career guidance

- How the teaching and learning needs of Looked After Children/ Previously Looked After Children are reflected in school development plans.
- Whether the school is making full use of all available resources in order to maximise opportunity for Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children.
- As part of arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the role, the report should enable the Governing Body to make overall judgements about the DT role in the context of wider school planning.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOOKED AFTER CHILD (APPENDIX 5)**

### **Confidentially**

The Designated Teacher will decide, in conjunction with relevant local authority staff, their approach to sharing sensitive information about an individual child. This is not just about keeping records but also about a child's identity in school. Many Looked After Children are reluctant for information to be known as they may feel stigmatised or different because they do not live with their families. For other children, there will be official requirements that their status is not identified. All staff must be sensitive to the degree of information disclosure needed according to the case and situation. All effort is taken to fully include the Looked After Child/ Previously Looked After Child in the school and local community, and steps are taken to avoid stigmatising.

The DT will decide with local authority staff and Safeguarding Team the extent to which information will be shared, and with which staff, including Teaching Assistants, on a case by case basis. It may not be necessary to share details of the child's traumatic past, where an understanding can be reached about the child's current needs and strategies to support these. Some cases may require selected staff to understand how specific previous experiences are impacting on current behaviour.

Where information is shared by selected staff, the young person is made aware of this - although how this is shared with them will depend on their age and understanding. (The explanation should emphasise that the school, social worker and carers are working together to promote the young person's education). For a child who is newly looked after, it is likely to be important to establish their view of their changed circumstances, and to monitor how this impact on their behaviour, attendance and performance.

Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children may need adult support to prepare for when they are asked about home by other students or staff. We aim to plan for this by discussing this with the child, on their entry to the school. (Or before, where possible, e.g. at a transition planning meeting). This may also need to be considered when their care status changes, as needed.

### **Looked After Children Placed by Other Authorities**

Looked After Children placed in care placements outside their originating authority, and especially those who are a long way from home, are especially vulnerable. It is the responsibility of the originating authority to ensure that the identified educational needs of any child placed in another authority area will be effectively met in the proposed placement before it is agreed.

School and the Social Worker should ensure that the Personal Education Plan is completed within 20 school days of the young person starting school, and that this is completed with the child and their carer. Where additional support is identified by the school, record this on the Personal Education Plan.

However, where there are delays school will endeavour to gain information from the previous school. Good practice would be to assess educational needs promptly and to plan for additional support where needed. This can occur before a PEP meeting and in readiness for the PEP.

In Worcestershire we work with the ISL/ Virtual school to ensure that the 'sending' LA has been consulted in order to ensure that all appropriate records are received.

### **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (USAC)**

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are likely to have English as an Additional Language and may have associated learning needs. They have often experienced trauma both in their home country and /or on route to the UK. This group of young people are often at risk of exploitation prior to being taken into care. School will seek support from ISL and Local Authority EAL support professionals about the language and cultural needs of these students on roll. All UASC will need access to enriched language environments. This needs to be carefully planned for, and a tailored timetable will be provided to meet individual learner's needs. School staff will work closely with the care placement to help meet the students cultural, social, emotional and personal development needs.

### **Special Guardianship**

We recognise that some pupils may have care determined by a Special Guardianship Order this is an order made by a court appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement, this may often be with a family member. These pupils may need additional support in the same way that LAC/PLAC pupils may need. In school, these pupils will be considered as part of LAC/PLAC discussion and added to the DT's annual report to governors.

### **Private Fostering**

A child is in private fostering if they live with friends/neighbours or relatives who are one step removed (e.g. second cousin). The arrangement must exist for longer than 28 days. Placements under this time do not count as private fostering. In accordance with an amendment to the Children Act 2004 schools should alert carers that the latter need to inform children's services of these arrangements.

The contact is:

Children's Services  
Private Fostering  
P.O.Box 585  
Worcester  
WR4 4AD

Tel 0845 607 2000

Young people who are privately fostered are likely to be experiencing significant upheavals and instability in their home lives. They are likely to need additional pastoral and learning support and may need closer monitoring and tracking of progress. We complete progress meetings to tackle barriers to learning on a half termly basis.



## **Including Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children**

### **Admission**

Fewer children are moving care placement, however, there still remains a high degree of mobility within the looked after population, often resulting in a change of school and subsequent gaps in education. It is critical that Looked After Children/ Previously Looked After Children are admitted to school with minimal delays. Prolonged periods at home can put the foster placement under great pressure and young people more likely to become disaffected.

Where the school is contacted directly by professionals regarding a place for a LAC, it will consider the application in line with the current Admissions Policy and liaise with the child's social worker.

### **Arriving at School**

Some Looked After Children may have long journeys to school, particularly if they live long distances from the school, as a result of changes in care placement. It is important that consideration is given to how late arrivals are managed and recorded, given that this may be out of the child/young person's control. Staff should be sensitive to how they address this.

### **Attendance**

It is vital that Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children have good attendance as a means to improve their educational outcomes. School closely monitors the attendance of all Looked After Children/Previously Looked after Children on roll.

Where attendance of a Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child is a cause for concern, the Class Teacher will raise with the Attendance Lead/DT any concerns with attendance. Typically, the Attendance Lead and DT will problem solve attendance concerns with the carer and student in a face to face meeting at the earliest opportunity. This will also be raised with the child's social worker to ensure all parties are informed.

If concerns continue, these will be raised with the Education Welfare Service and a multi-agency approach to improving attendance and engagement in learning will be planned and recorded as part of the PEP (LAC). Holistic needs and identified barriers should be addressed by appropriate professionals within a specified time frame on a case by case basis.

### **Exclusions**

Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England (2015) draws particular attention to LAC as a group particularly at risk of exclusion. "The exclusion rates for certain groups of pupils are consistently higher than average. This includes: pupils with SEN; pupils eligible for Free School Meals; looked after children and pupils from certain ethnic groups."

The school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school and will involve the child's social worker and seek advice and support from Children's Services professionals and ISL/Virtual School as soon as possible.

Exclusions from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England (2015) sets out the following guidelines for schools.

22. As well as having disproportionately high rates of exclusion, there are certain groups of pupils with additional needs who are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of exclusion. This includes

pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) and looked after children. Head teachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding permanently any pupil with a statement of SEN or a looked after child.

23. Schools should engage proactively with parents in supporting the behaviour of pupils with additional needs. In relation to looked after children, schools should co-operate with foster carers or children's home workers and the local authority that looks after the child.

24. Where the school has concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion, of a child with additional needs, a pupil with a statement of SEN or a looked after child it should, in partnership with others (including the local authority as necessary), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This should involve assessing the suitability of provision for a pupil's SEN. Where a pupil has a statement of SEN, schools should consider requesting an early annual review or interim/emergency review.

Where a managed move is sought for a Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child, steps will need to be taken to minimise the impact of previous multiple rejections that Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children have typically received, and also to ensure that transitions are managed and planned supportively. The aim of such move is usually to encourage behavioural change, provide a fresh start, whilst understanding that a move is likely to have a deeper emotional impact on a Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child than other students. The impact of trauma, separation and loss on all Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children should be considered as part of an assessment of needs when planning significant interventions such as managed moves. We recognise that any move is often seen as another rejection by a Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child and the consequences of this can be considerable and long term. These measures are only considered when all other options and strategies have been exhausted.

### **Part Time and Alternative Provision**

Where a part time table is sought to support the Looked After Child to access a curriculum and/or to address a behavioural need, we recognise that the child continues to have an entitlement to a full-time education. Any changes to this must be agreed with the child's social worker and carer through a Pastoral Support Plan or Personal Education Plan. Part Time schooling can place the care placement under enormous pressure, if school is considering this, it must be discussed with the designated member of staff.

In the event of part time provision at school, or elsewhere, we will have regard to the Alternative Provision - Statutory guidance for local authorities 2013.

Where a student cannot cope with full time education, they should be provided with as many hours of provision as they are capable of attending. We understand that engagement in full time education is proven to reduce the risk of offending and anti-social behaviour in children/young people. The school will consider how the remaining hours of education per week will be delivered, so that learning is uninterrupted wherever possible. The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children will have oversight of all the education provided, where it is delivered elsewhere. No students are placed on part time timetable indefinitely. A part time timetable is always part of a plan to return the student to full time education (e.g. A pastoral support plan, or a personal education plan for alternative provision) and within a specified time frame.

The guidance suggests that where Looked After Children have been identified as needing alternative provision they should be placed in suitable provision within two weeks and support services should be put into place no later than two weeks after the placement starts. When a LAC/PLAC is placed into alternative provision, we recognise the importance of multi-agency support and will work with education psychologists, CAMHS and social workers as appropriate.

### **The Personal Education Plan (PEP's)**

Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children are statutory planning meetings which should occur within 20 school days of a child becoming looked after and reviewed at least annually. Our practice is to update PEP's each term through the facilitation of a planned PEP meeting. A current PEP is in evidence at every statutory review of the child's care plan. PEP's are significant vehicles for celebrating the achievements of young people and effecting change. Education targets and strategies set through the PEP should be known by teaching staff. This is especially important if issues have arisen regarding classroom, homework or behaviour in certain lessons.

The young person is, wherever possible, involved in the PEP. Where a young person does not wish to attend, the meeting should nevertheless take place and they should be encouraged to comment on their education and progress through the relevant section of the PEP. Issues around confidentiality for the Looked After Child should be respected and information shared on a need to know basis. Teaching staff who are in contact with the child should be aware that they are looked after, in order to promote an understanding of the child's / young person's needs, and to ensure positive systems of support are in place.

The PEP would encompass all the additional educational plans, such as those described under part time and alternative provision. The PEP will also outline how the Pupil Premium + would be used to improve outcomes.

### **Improving learning and Raising Achievement**

#### **Curriculum Guidelines**

Some aspects of the curriculum may be difficult for Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children such as 'My family', or designing a card for Mother's/Father's Day. In such instances, teachers plan for alternatives. For further advice on the curriculum, advice and ideas can be sought from ISL/Virtual School.

#### **Flexible Curriculum**

Looked After Children / Previously Looked After Children, like many young people will often need additional support to make adequate progress. They are given every opportunity to learn and achieve in ways best suited to their individual needs, including being offered a flexible personalised curriculum. Where there has been extended school absence, or changed syllabus between school placements, alternative means of securing attainment and progress is always made and all professionals supporting the student are made aware of what will need to be done to secure this. High expectations of the child's ability to make good progress should be in evidence by everyone delivering education. School staff will also make efforts to support and encourage other professionals, in the network around the Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child, to have similarly high expectations of progress and behaviour.

## **Examinations**

Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children should be given every opportunity to succeed in their examinations. In the case of absence for any reason the student is given advice and guidance on revision, and where possible they are offered revision/booster classes at school and take the exams on school site. Additional support is provided where needed.

## **Expectations**

Low expectations by adults have been identified as one of the key reasons that Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children fail to achieve. Sometimes assumptions are made that limit young people's achievement rather than encourage them to do well. The trust will support the agenda for Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children through a combination of high expectations and standards with inclusion. This will entail analysis of student performance data, setting targets for achievement and promoting teaching strategies aimed at raising attainment through personalised learning, and addressing any difficulties the pupil may be experiencing.

## **Extended School**

We aim to support all Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children to feel secure and confident in their membership and inclusion of the school community. This is very important for their social and emotional development and can help to raise self-esteem through the acquisition of skills which are often transferable to school. All Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children are encouraged to take a full and active part in positive out of school activities. These may be identified as part of their Personal Education Plan. Funding is sometimes sought via the Pupil Premium+ and / or applications for additional funding via the Virtual School.

## **Additional Support**

All Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children are prioritised for additional support where they are not meeting expected standards or levels of progress. Some Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children who do not meet these criteria but are also NOT meeting their expected rate of progress are provided with additional support to boost attainment – this may be as part of an Individual Education Plan.

## **Aspirations beyond school**

Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children are under-represented in higher education and there is a high dropout rate in further education. As a school, we will be supportive in encouraging students to develop their understanding of 'The world or work' through curriculum opportunities, enrichment activities and developing skills to support individual ambitions.

## **Key Worker**

School will consider allocating a Key Worker to Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children to act as a regular point of contact through the duration of the child's time at school. School will be mindful that all Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children may need support and this should not exclude Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children who

are high achievers. Support may be needed to provide emotional support and guidance at times of pressure and stress where language ability and emotional development enable this to occur.