



King's Academy Ringmer

LAC and PLAC Policy

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Contents

	Page No
1. Definition	1
2. School Commitment	2
3. Roles and Responsibilities	2
4. Confidentiality	5
5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)	5
6. Admission/Induction Arrangements	5
7. Specific Support	6

1. Definition

For the purposes of this policy a child 'looked after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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

A child is in 'state care' outside of England and Wales if s/he is in care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

King's Academy Ringmer recognises that 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children' may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

2. School Commitment

Nationally, 'Looked After Children' (LAC) and 'Previously Looked After Children' (PLAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 75% of LAC and PLAC leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to

further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping LAC and PLAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

King's Academy Ringmer recognises that LAC and PLAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC and PLAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances.

King's Academy Ringmer is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of LAC and PLAC in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher (SENCO) is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.
- All LAC and PLAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Principal

- Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC and PLAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC and PLAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used to good effect, for the benefit of all disadvantaged students and for the whole student body. This funding should not be assigned to individual students, but a cumulative amount to improve learning experiences and progress

3.2 Governing Body

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Principal, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC and PLAC are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 - The number of LAC and PLAC students on the school's roll (if any).
 - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

3.3 Designated Teacher

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be *"someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for LAC and PLAC assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy shares and supports high expectations for them."*

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.

- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC and PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC and PLAC say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.

3.4 Staff

All our staff will:

- Ensure that all LAC and PLAC are made to feel welcome and included
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all students.
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC, such as, the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families

- Understand the reasons which may be behind a LAC or PLAC's behaviour. And why they may need more support than other children
- Understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC as individuals and not publicly treat them differently from their peers
- Be aware that 60% of LAC and PLAC say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.
- Understand both what a PEP(Personal Education Plan) is, and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers – and depending upon age and understanding, the child them self – and understand what everyone needs to do to help the child achieve their potential

4 Confidentiality

Information on LAC and PLAC will be shared with school staff on a "need to know basis". The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All LAC must have a care plan drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP); this forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document. There will be discussion about how the child, the school and the Local Authority can together ensure that through the content, implementation and review of the PEP, the child achieves well. These meetings will involve the young person concerned, the parents/carers, the social worker, a teacher and other professionals, as appropriate. If the child has an Education Health Care plan, this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

6. Admission/Induction Arrangements

LAC and PLAC are a priority for admission and we follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the school or to care, parents/carers will be given an introductory booklet about the school's expectations and processes, and the child will meet with the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC. The Designated Teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child feels supported in the school. Consideration will be given to giving the child a key adult. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school, and as soon as practicable after they are received, a meeting will be held with the parents/carers, a social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new PEP. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established from the outset. 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 meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When children already on school roll enter care, the school will ensure that they meet the Designated Teacher as soon as possible, and that the child and his/her parents/carers are made aware of the school's procedures and additional support arrangements. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and a PEP will be prepared as soon as possible; we will follow the procedure adopted for those children at the school who are already in care.

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 and other such activities. At this meeting all means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed; this might include a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in the child's circumstances.

Many LAC and PLAC do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel 'different'. We will discuss this with the child, and agree who should be aware of his/her care status; however, we recognise that in some cases – for example, if the child has a severe learning difficulty – this may not be possible.

7 Specific Support

7.1 Additional funding

LAC and PLAC are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Eligibility for such funding and the sums of money available will be determined in line with government policy.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding, where available, for all eligible LAC and PLAC on roll to provide additional, personalised support and ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

The appropriate use of allocated funding will be assessed by reference to the Personal Education Plan.

7.2 School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that LAC and PLAC enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving places for them on trips and other enrichment activities which they are eligible for and by allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. Responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities lies with the social worker, although this is often delegated to carers. The person who may give permission will be identified at the first PEP meeting. If there is any uncertainty, we will always send consent forms to the social worker.