



Monkfrith School

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and 'normality' for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

We endeavour to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention to all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Definition

Looked after children (LAC) are defined as children who:

- are provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours under the Children Act 1989, sections 20 and 21
- are subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989, part 3
- are subject to a placement order

Previously LAC (PLAC) are defined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as children who:

- are no longer looked after by an LA because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order; or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

Legal Framework

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of looked after children. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2024) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children 2023'

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and trancies for all looked after children and previously looked after children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of looked after children
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of looked after children and previously looked after children

Objectives

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
- Ensure all previously looked after children have a Learning Support Plan to help diminish the difference between their peers and monitor the way their Pupil Premium Grant money is spent
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the LEA's Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education and Skills / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care 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 do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

The named Governor (Jay Mudhar) will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked after children.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Complying with their duties under legislation, having regard to KCSIE guidance and ensuring that policies, procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Adopting a whole-school approach to safeguarding arrangements and child protection, ensuring it is central to the school's processes

- Holding the school to account on how it supports LAC, including how the Pupil Premium+ (PP+) is used and their level of progress.
- Working with the LA to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.
- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of LAC and PLAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring that there are no unintended barriers to the admission of LAC and PLAC either at normal transition or any other point of the school year.
- Appointing a designated teacher (DT), who is appropriately qualified to support the educational achievement of LAC.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC has access to appropriate training, resources and support.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each LAC's:
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order).
 - Contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary
- Ensure that the headteacher provides updates to the governing body about the progress and attainment of LAC and PLAC.

The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of LAC placed within and outside the authority.
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational attainment and progress of LAC as if those children attended a single school.
- Ensuring that there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are attending the school.
 - Gather information about the education placement, attendance and educational progress of LAC.
 - Ensure sufficient information about a pupil's mental health, SEN or disability is available to the school so that appropriate support can be provided.
 - Inform headteachers and DTs of any pupil on roll who is looked after.
 - Ensure social workers, the DT, the school, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the pupil's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP.

- Ensure all LAC at the school have up-to-date, effective and high-quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes.
- Avoid drift or delay in providing suitable educational provision, including special educational provision, and unplanned termination of educational arrangements through proactive, multi-agency co-operation.
- Ensure the educational achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the LA's corporate parenting structures.

The Head Teacher will:

- Appoint the designated teacher
- Allow the designated teacher has the time and facilities to carry out their duties
- Ensure PP+ funding is managed effectively.
- Promote the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.
- Oversee the development of the policy on looked after children
- Be responsible for all systems to support looked after children.
- Ensure all members of staff are aware of supporting LAC children
- report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school
 - an analysis of outcomes as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints

The Designated Teacher:

The designated teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school.

The designated teacher is responsible for:

- Working with the VSH and social worker to:
 - Promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC.
 - Develop and implement their PEP.
 - Discuss how funding can be used to support the pupil's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies affecting LAC and PLAC.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners.
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand what can affect how LAC and PLAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.

- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the pupil's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC.

The Designated Teacher at Monkfrith is Jude Deasey , Headteacher.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and PLAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PLAC.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Understanding the importance of involving the pupil's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education.
- Being a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their pupil's progress at school.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and PLAC.
- Being vigilant of any safeguarding concerns regarding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and PLA

Personal Education Plan

- The school is aware that all LAC must have a care plan, and that PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.
- The school understands that the PEP is intended to serve as an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.

- The school is aware that, wherever a pupil is placed, it is the responsibility of their social worker, supported by the authority's VSH, to initiate a PEP and arrange to meet with the school and the pupil's carer.
- The school will ensure that children's PEPs reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the pupil and will be reviewed termly.
- The DT will liaise with the VSH and social workers to share information and act as the in-school lead on how the PEP is developed and used to make sure the pupil's progress towards education targets is monitored.
- The school, in collaboration with the pupil, carer, and other professionals will collaborate to ensure completion of the PEP and that PEP is used as a working document intended to support the pupil's educational needs, raise their aspirations and improve their life chances.
- The school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the pupil's PEP are implemented without delay.
- The DT will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the pupil's educational attainment and progress.

PEP content

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- The provision of suitable education provided by the LA, where the pupil is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a pupil is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support needed to help the pupil meet their aspirations, which may include:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The VSH and the DT will ensure that information is included within a LAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment. Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

Working with agencies and the VSH

- The school is aware that strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is vital to identifying and responding to the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- The school will work proactively and collaboratively with other professionals in other agencies and organisations in line with the framework of expectations outlined in the government's Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance document by:
 - Collaborating with services to achieve shared goals and share information.
 - Learning from evidence and sharing perspective to evaluate provision.

- Prioritising and sharing resources depending on pupils' needs.
- Celebrating inclusivity and diversity and challenging discrimination.
- Mutually and constructively challenging others' assumptions in a respectful manner.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LEA's published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. 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 carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

School Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extra curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Safeguarding

The school recognises that many LAC and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.

Where a LAC or PLAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Exclusions

The school recognises that suspending or excluding LAC or PLAC can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides. When responding to incidents, the school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Suspension and Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

Suspension or exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.

Pupils with SEND

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.

In cases where pupils have an EHCP, the DT will work with the VSH to ensure that their EHCP works in harmony with their care plan and PEP to tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the pupil's needs are being met.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should follow the Complaints Policy.

Review

This policy was reviewed January 2025.

This policy will be reviewed in January 2027.