

**NEW COLLEGE LEICESTER**



# **Education of Looked After Children (LAC)**

**October 2024**

## 1. Aims

Many LAC (Looked After Children) & PLAC (Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children) 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. This has resulted in the attainment of this group not being in line with the attainment of their peers nationally.

At New College Leicester, 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.*'

## 2. Our Principles

- We are corporate parents legally because we are in loco parentis. As corporate parents we accept that we have to be challenged by the question 'is this good enough for my child?'
- To work together, overcome differences between professionals and be child and solution focused.
- Our LAC will have timely access to education that meets their needs. No LAC will be without an appropriate education.
- Our LAC will not miss or be suspended/excluded from education wherever possible: we will always work to find solutions and alternatives for individual LAC.
- Our LAC will feel safe in college and our aspiration is that they will also enjoy learning. How children feel about their college is important to us: we will listen and respond.

## 3. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

It also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

## 4. Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC) or Children in Care (CiC) refers to a child 'looked-after by a local authority' as outlined by section 22 Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

### 4.1 Looked-after children/Children in Care

LAC/CiC 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

### 4.2 Previously looked-after children

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) refers to children who are

'...no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/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,'

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher for Looked after Children is Mrs K Simpson (Director of Learning). The Designated Teacher will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them as per statutory guidance '*The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Children in Care*' (If parts of the designated teacher role are delegated, this will be made clear to all those who are involved with the child).

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
  - Working with VSHs
  - Promoting a whole-school culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
  - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
  - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students
- Contribute to the development and review of whole-school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead, Mrs E Rudge-Tezcan, to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

#### 5.1.1 Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs
- Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place

- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for students
- Ensure that:
  - A looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered
  - PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced
  - The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

### 5.1.2 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and how to support them
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging parents to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure other staff also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the [SEND Code of Practice](#), as it relates to looked-after children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHCP) that a looked-after child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

### 5.1.3 Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:
  - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
  - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action
  - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption
  - Making sure that, if a looked-after child moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
  - There's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
  - School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
  - Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion:
  - Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
  - Working with the VSH and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

### 5.2 All staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all students.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

### 5.3 Foster Carer

- Support the child's education and encourage them to achieve.
- Liaise with the child's social worker to agree tasks and areas of responsibility relating to the child's education.
- Contribute to the development and review of the child's PEP.
- Be the main point of contact for the school on a day to day basis and sign the home school agreement.
- Support the child to attend school regularly and engage in school activities and ensure adequate support at home for the child to carry out homework.
- Carry out any allocated tasks relating to the child's education and fulfilment of the corporate parenting role as set out in the child's placement plan.
- Attend parent's evenings and school performances that the child is involved in.
- Receive training and support that enables them to engage effectively with the education system and advocate for the child.
- Take an active interest in the child's education and provide a home environment that actively encourages learning.
- Ensure the child has access to books and materials to support their education.
- Ensure homework and revision is completed.
- Promote regular school attendance and good behaviour.
- Liaise with the school to deal with any arising issues.

### 5.4 Governors: Our nominated governor for Looked After Children is Mrs S Thistlethwaite. Our governor will:

- ensure that the needs of Looked After Children are taken into account at a college management level
- support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available when necessary and ensuring that they have the opportunity to attend training about Looked After Children
- ensure that the needs and outcomes of Looked After Children are incorporated in policy decisions wherever relevant
- ensure the college's work with Looked After Children is reviewed by the governing body.
- undertake appropriate training as necessary

### 5.5 Leadership Team: Our leadership team will:

- listen to and take account of the views of Looked After Children
- regularly review provision and outcomes for Looked After Children
- follow guidance and statutory guidance on admissions, exclusions etc
- prioritise Looked After Children in resource decisions and ensure that resources directly targeted at Looked After Children are used directly for them
- work with, support and challenge wider partnerships in providing the best possible educational provision and support for our Looked After Children
- ensure Looked After Children have access to the best of what the college has to offer and that barriers to do with being in care which might make this difficult are overcome
- promote multi agency working and a solution focused, child centred approach
- ensure the outcomes for Looked After Children are tracked, monitored and appropriate interventions are put in place and included in termly PEPs

### 5.6 Virtual School – The Local Authority organisation to support young people in Local Authority care.

Staff at NCL will work with our Virtual School so they will provide:

- support to our college to ensure that our Looked After Children access high quality learning and support, which meets their needs in a timely way and leads them onto a long-term education, training and employment pathway
- strategic guidance to ensure there are high aspirations for Looked After Children's education and the right provision, policies and protocols are in place to support them
- direct, targeted support for Looked After Children
- training about education issues for all those who work with our Looked After Children
- specialist support to our college, for example: multi agency working, Personal Education Planning, preventing exclusion and promoting inclusion
- advice to other local authorities who have Looked After Children educated in our college
- data and analysis of outcomes for Looked After Children in our LA
- Promote effective multi-agency working that benefits all looked after children and young people.

Partners include:

- Carers
- Social workers
- Schools
- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Residential children's homes
- Youth Offending Service
- Special Education Service
- Education Welfare Service
- Educational Psychology Service
- Raising Achievement Team
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Admission and Exclusion team
- The Heritage Panel
- Leicester City Football Club

## 6. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

A PEP is a mechanism for promoting and prioritising the education of young people in public care and is a statutory requirement. New College Leicester ensures that there is a PEP for every LAC in our school, and we ensure that PEPs are revisited and reviewed 3 times each year - once in each school term. The planning process for PEP meetings will be carried out in collaboration between our school, the social worker, the carer, the young person and the Virtual School Team. The designated person for LAC in our school, Mrs K Simpson will ensure regular meetings take place and that they are the single point of contact for all LAC in our school.

New College Leicester School will set appropriate SMART targets that will enable each young person to make accelerated progress. Our school may request Pupil Premium Plus funding each term via the PEP for activity that is additional to and different from what the school would normally be expected to provide and that will enable each young person to learn and grow.

New College Leicester completes all PEPs online template using ePep, in line with Local Authority Procedures and will seek advice from the Virtual School Team as necessary.

## 7. Dealing with Key Challenges

### 7.1 Admissions – We will:

- act in accordance with the law and admissions codes as they apply to colleges, giving timely access to Looked After Children.
- work with the local authority and other authorities to plan for admissions wherever they may occur
- if appropriate, ensure that 'pre-admission professionals [and if appropriate PEP] meetings' are held and that arrangements are in place to support a child starting a new college

- ensure the PEP is reviewed within 28 days of admission.

#### **7.2 Access to appropriate curriculum - We will:**

- ensure that Looked After Children will have access to the best curriculum that we can offer. We will work proactively with others to ensure that the curriculum is developed to meet needs.

#### **7.3 Access to support for LAC with Special Educational Needs – We will**

- work proactively to ensure children's needs are assessed early and their needs met.
- ensure that the designated teacher takes the lead in making sure that support or assessment from other agencies is in place.

#### **7.4 Preventing suspension and improving attendance:**

- The Virtual College will be informed immediately, of suspensions by email
- Where attendance is falling or low the college will work with other agencies, including the Virtual College, to address the underlying issues and ensure a plan is in the PEP
- The college will work with other agencies [including foster carer, social worker, psychology services and Virtual College] on prevention strategies. The college will seek, accept and be provided with support in a timely manner according to the availability of resources [including from the Virtual College] if a pattern of exclusion is developing and ensure plans to address issues are in the PEP
- Funding and resources already in the college's budget to prevent exclusion will be used to promote inclusion and prevent exclusion
- Our aim is to endeavour to never exclude a Looked After Child:
  - Permanent exclusions will only occur when all other options have been exhausted
  - Where a permanent exclusion can be anticipated because of a developing pattern of behaviour, alternatives will be found where possible before this occurs
  - If there is a permanent exclusion or managed transfer, we will not take a child off roll until a new placement is found. We will take a lead in working with others to find a high-quality alternative placement

#### **7.5 Communication and Sharing information:**

- We will share attendance, exclusion, target setting, achievement data and plans with relevant agencies including the Virtual College.
- We will endeavour to respond to requests marked urgent within 24 hours and within an hour in emergencies.
- In other cases, we will adhere to statutory or agreed timescales.

#### **7.6 Multi-agency working:**

- We will work proactively with other agencies to meet the needs of Looked After Children and will contribute to the development of these services through receiving and contributing to training.

#### **7.7 Supporting transitions and transition Post 16:**

- The designated teacher from the next education placement – including designated tutor or equivalent in FE/VI College - will be invited to the professionals and PEP meetings in our college. Our designated teacher will attend professionals and PEP meetings in the new placement as requested and appropriate.
- From Y9 onwards, a plan for further education, training and employment will be written into the PEP with the support of the Careers Adviser. The Careers Adviser will ensure this plan is handed over to the Post 16 provider.



### 7.8 Working with other LA's

- We will expect other LAs to provide support for their Looked After Children in our college, including planning, funding and support. This will include all the stipulations of this policy and a particular emphasis on:
  - Pre-planning for new education placements. Where there are issues, a pre-placement admissions meeting should be held with all professionals involved.
  - Continuing financial support
  - Continuing professional support via the PEP process.

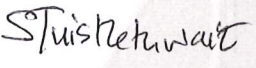
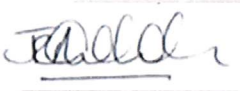
### 8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Exclusions
- SEN
- Supporting students with medical needs

### 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing board every year.

Author:	Mrs K Simpson, Director of Learning for Inclusion/SENDCo			
Review Date:	October 2025			
Signed:		Chair of Governors: Sue Thistlethwaite	Date:	21/11/24
Signed:		Principal: James Aldred	Date:	03.10.2024

