



Arthur Terry  
**Learning**  
Partnership

## The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership Policy for the care and support of Looked After Children (LAC) previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and those children with a social worker

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## **Statement of intent**

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Looked after Children (LAC) and previously-LAC (PLAC) are of real concern. Some pupils who are looked after, require special treatment and additional support to improve their situation. Those on the edge of care equally need additional support in order to avoid them coming into local authority care and strengthen the support on offer to them and their families in order to stay together if appropriate.

Sometimes LAC are referred to as Child in Care (CIC). For the purposes of this document it will reference Looked After Children (LAC).

All schools within the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership (ATLP) endeavour to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Apply corporate parenting principles to all LAC
- 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.
- Ensure that Covid recovery plans reflect the needs of care experienced children
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.
- Promote wider opportunities for children in care, particularly in the arts, sports or extra-curricular activities
- Ensure that LAC, and PLAC, are proportionately represented in the school eg school council etc
- Ensure that all Trust policies reflect the needs of care experienced children and are sensitive to their needs

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 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 (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2019) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school/Trust policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- One-to-One Tuition Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Covid recovery policy

## **2. Definitions**

2.1. **“Looked after children (LAC)”** are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children in public care who are placed with foster carer, in children’s residential homes, with parents or other relatives, in semi-independent or supported accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA share parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents (voluntary care, section 20).

2.2. **“Previously-LAC”** are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

2.3 **Children with a social worker** are defined as:

- Children on a CIN Plan
- Children on a Child protection plan

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

3.1. The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Trust has a coherent policy for LAC and PLAC.
- Reviewing the Trust’s policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring each school has a designated teacher for LAC/PLAC
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC has received the appropriate training and is represented on the schools senior leadership team.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child
- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.

- Ensuring that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated Trust leader to evaluate the progress of LAC across all schools.
- Reviewing, annually, the effectiveness of the policy.

3.2. The virtual school (VS) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- Supporting arrangements to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC, PLAC and those children with a social worker.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- working with agencies to further understand and address the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience
- Acting as one of the educational advocates for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC and children with a social worker as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
  - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
  - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
  - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
  - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
  - Avoid delays in supporting suitable educational provision.
  - Ensure the education 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 authority's corporate parenting structures.

3.3. The headteacher of each school is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher, the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties including updating training and development.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring good use of PP+ to raise academic attainment and provided any resources according to immediate need
- Supporting strategies to raise academic attainment for LAC and diminish the difference compared to their peers
- Allocating catch up funding appropriately and access tuition to support LAC following Covid 19
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
  - The number of LAC, previously-LAC and children with a social worker in the school
  - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
  - The attendance of LAC, PLAC, and those with a social worker compared to other pupil groups
  - Avoiding fixed term or permanent exclusions for all care experienced children and exploring alternatives with the LA to ensure this is a last resort
  - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions if issued, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority. This includes ensuring that trauma training or emotion coaching is provided for all staff.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

3.4. The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC within each school is responsible for:

- Building a relationship with the child or young person and acting as their voice where necessary.
- Advocating for care experienced children
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services, carers, virtual schools and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets and attending their pep meetings.

- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC, PLAC and those with a social worker and sharing relevant, key information where appropriate.
- Ensuring all staff are provided with trauma training and/or emotion coaching
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Working with the child's VS and social worker to develop and implement their PEP within timescales.
- Ensuring relevant academic data is provided on the e-pep for all subject
- Working with the headteacher to provide regular individual updates and submit an annual report to the Trust Board , which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC.

3.5. The DSL in each school is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VS.
- Liaising with the DT and Headteacher where there are concerns with a LAC
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

3.6. The SENCO in each school is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC, PLAC and those with a social worker where there are additional needs.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of LAC, PLAC and those with a social worker.
- Supporting the DT and class teachers if a EHCNA is required.

3.7. All staff, across all schools, are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC, PLAC and those with a social worker (where appropriate) and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC, PLAC and those with a social worker.
- Reporting any concerns (however small) to the DT and or Headteacher
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC, PLAC and those with a social worker.
- Having high aspirations for all care experienced young people.

- Being aware and implementing any strategies provided for individual pupils.
- Using relational and or restorative approaches to children in care.
- Showing empathy and understanding to all care experience young people.

#### **4. PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN (PEP)**

- 4.1. All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan. PEPs provide a record of the child's academic journey and are maintained for 75 years. The individual can access these at anytime in their child or adult life.
- 4.2. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- 4.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- 4.4. The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- 4.5. PP+ is allocated through the PEP targets
- 4.6. If additional funding is required for a young person, this needs to be discussed with the VS and an amount agreed
- 4.7. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- 4.8. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:
  - Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age. This is relevant for primary schools within the Partnership.
  - On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
  - Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
  - Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
  - School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
  - Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
  - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.

- Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
- Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

4.9 PEP targets should be aspirational and reflect the need to raise academic attainment.

## **5. Working with agencies and the Virtual School (VS)**

- 5.1. Each school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers and parents where requested.
- 5.2. Each school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review and pep.
- 5.3. Each school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and previously-LAC.
- 5.4. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VS and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child. Reasonable adjustments will be made for care experienced children.
- 5.5. The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC will communicate with the VS and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- 5.6. Through the designated teacher, each school will work with the VS, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
- 5.7. The designated teacher will communicate with the VS and agree on how pupil premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- 5.8. PP+ for previously-LAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. An appropriate pupil premium policy will be in place.
- 5.9. Each school will work with the VS to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of the cohort of LAC, and pupil premium for previously-LAC, and according to their needs.
- 5.10. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

5.11. The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VS regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.

5.12. Each school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and previously-LAC.

## **6. Training**

6.1. The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC, previously-LAC and children with a social worker have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- New DT training
- DT network meetings held by VS
- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding
- Trauma training and/or emotion coaching
- Peer on peer abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Substance issue
- CSE
- Specific training where individuals have received a diagnosis or there is a need
- The ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)

## **7. Pupil mental health**

7.1. LAC, previously-LAC and children with a social worker are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

- 7.2. The designated teacher will work with the VS to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously-LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- 7.3. A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used on an annual basis to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC and previously-LAC's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.
- 7.4. The impact of covid will be considered and additional support will be accessed for those children struggling post pandemic.

## **8. Exclusions**

- 8.1. Past experiences of LAC and previously-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behavioural Policy.
- 8.2. Each school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.
- 8.3. Where a school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VS will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.4. Exclusion will be avoided for all LAC and only be used as a last resort, after the school and VS 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.
- 8.5. Each school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VS on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.
- 8.6. 1<sup>st</sup> day provision should be explored in the event of an exclusion to ensure pressure on the care placement is minimised and an appropriate educational setting can be accessed by the young person.

## **9. Pupils with SEND**

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- 9.3. If appropriate, the VS coordinator for PLAC will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-LAC.

## **10. Information sharing**

10.1. Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC, previously-LAC and children with a social worker are understood and met.

10.2. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on LAC, previously LAC and children with a social worker and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

11.1. This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the Trust Board

11.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2024.