

## LAC Guidance

Hampton Academies Trust



<b>Policy last reviewed:</b>	September 2022
<b>Next review due:</b>	September 2025
<b>Member of staff responsible:</b>	Miss Emily Culpin
<b>Ratified by:</b>	Trust Board

## 1 Rationale

Looked After Children (LAC) and previously Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to other groups. Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

The school is committed to do all that it can to promote the educational achievement and well-being of Children who are Looked After (LAC).

A looked after child is a child in care (a child is 'looked after' if they are in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours). 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 arrangements 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.

### Main roles:

- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The governor with responsibility for Safeguarding and LAC

## 2 Implementation

The Designated Person for LAC has the responsibility for the day-to-day welfare and achievements of the students within the school. They also have a strategic role for overseeing all LAC in the school and work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure the safeguarding of these individuals.

This guidance describes our approach to meeting the requirements set out in:

- The Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Duty on Local Authorities to promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children)
- Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children (Feb 2018)
- Care Matters, Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 "A First-Class Education")
- The Children and Young person's Act 2008 (Duty on Schools to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care)
- Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care.

In line with our ethos and principles, our guidance aims to identify specific roles and responsibilities within school to promote the learning, progress and well-being of LAC.

The school recognises that the provisions outlined in this guidance must be in place regardless of whether there are any LAC currently on the school roll.

This guidance was developed in partnership with Local Authority Virtual School staff

## 3 Aims and Objectives

### 3.1 The Local Governing Body and School Commitment to Enhanced Support

The Local Governing Body recognises that it is the corporate parent (any and all adults working for the governing body or a school) that has responsibility and accountability for the well-being and

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future prospects of children in their care. A good corporate parent is expected to offer everything that a good parent would.

We recognise that entering care represents a significant change in a child's life. At this stage the State takes on an immense responsibility for these children by agreeing to undertake the parental role on a day to day basis. That means that all those working for the State at a local level in this school should demand no less for each child in care than they would for their own children.

- The Local Governing Body and school will ensure that high quality learning opportunities and education are provided for all students.
- We will ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all.
- We recognise that LAC can be especially vulnerable and are sometimes 'at risk' of failure in the learning context.

## 3.2 Aims for our Looked After Students

Our aims in supporting Looked After Students in school are:

- To ensure all policies and procedures are followed sensitively for LAC.
- To ensure that all LAC have access to a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- To provide personalised learning and curriculum appropriate to needs and ability.
- To support and monitor social progress ensuring key adults prioritise respectful and responsive relationship building with individual children and provide appropriate support for social development within the peer group.
- To ensure that wherever possible LAC receive a full 25 hours of education each week.
- To ensure that students who are LAC take as full a part as possible in all school activities and strive to reduce and eliminate any barriers that may stop them from taking part.
- To ensure that carers, social workers and parents (as appropriate) of LAC are involved and kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- To ensure that wherever possible LAC are involved in decisions affecting their learning, the plans for progress and future provision.
- To ensure that success is appropriately recognised and reinforced.
- To ensure that any emerging concerns are followed up in a timely way with skill and sensitivity (e.g. changes in patterns of behaviour and attendance).
- To liaise and cooperate with appropriate partners, in particular the Virtual School, to ensure that all plans complement and support the promotion of the educational achievement and well-being of LAC.

## 4 Admissions to the School

- The Local Governing Body supports the Local Authority's approach to admissions giving LAC the highest priority for admission to the identified school.
- The school will ensure that LAC are named a first priority within our written admissions criteria.
- Sometimes care placement changes lead to LAC entering school mid-term or mid-year if this is thought to be in the best interests of the child. The school will ensure that in these circumstances LAC will be admitted to the school in a timely manner, even if this would mean that this would increase class sizes above the recommended maximum. As necessary, we will give a positive welcome, plan entry, offer additional support and pre-entry visits as required to help students settle into school.

## 5 Inclusion and Allocation of Resources

- Our guidance recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based, and stimulating curriculum and learning programme.

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- For LAC there can often be a need to develop learning opportunities emphasising personalised planning and planned inclusive approaches.
- The Local Governing Body will ensure the school makes all appropriate learning provision for LAC. Resources are allocated to support LAC in line with this guidance and with our wider school teaching and learning policies and good practice.
- Additional funding allocated to LAC students must be ring fenced to meet their needs. The Virtual School allocates funding to students according to targets agreed at the PEP meeting.
- We aim to ensure that LAC student needs are met and that reasonable costs are not a barrier to this.

## 6 Monitoring the Progress of Children Looked After

- Progress for LAC is monitored and supported and is guided by school policies for teaching and learning.
- We will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of LAC at regular intervals. This will be formally reported to the Virtual School
- We will ensure that the school makes an assessment of the student's needs and attainment on entry, to ensure continuity of learning.
- We recognise the importance of electronic Personal Education Plans (ePEPs) and understand that they are statutory school documents.
- The ePEP is key to the planning and monitoring of education for a LAC
- The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After will ensure there is an ePEP in place for all LAC in the school.
- The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After will ensure an ePEP takes place within 20 days of a LAC joining the school or becoming Looked After.

In relation to previously LAC, although they no longer required an ePEP, the designated teachers should continue to consider their educational needs. The designated teachers should maintain links with VSHs who must make advice and information available, in order to promote the educational achievement of this group of previously looked-after children.

## 7 Attendance and Exclusion

- The school recognises that nationally LAC are statistically much more likely to have a poor attendance record and are up to 5 times more likely to be excluded than their non-looked after peers.
- The school will take specific steps to monitor the attendance of LAC and will notify all appropriate partners at an early stage if there is an indication that problems with attendance might occur.
- The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that exclusion is rarely used for LAC and then is always only as a last resort, after all other avenues have been explored.
- The school will make arrangements for first day provision for any excluded LAC as it would for any pupil up until day 6 of an exclusion.
- The school will ensure that should a LAC be identified as at risk of exclusion, then contact is made with the LA Inclusion Officer and the named contact within the Virtual School immediately, to enable early intervention / preventative strategies to be instigated.
- In adverse circumstances, such as COVID lockdown, LAC will be encouraged to attend school, and will have regular safeguarding checks if working from home.

## 8 Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After will co-ordinate record keeping for all LAC in school.

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- Records will include individual learning plans, up to date progress and attainment records, ePEP planning records and personalised information relating to care context as appropriate. These records will be maintained in a single place, having regard to the statutory nature of some of these documents and the confidential information that they contain.
- LAC status is appropriately 'flagged' in school management information systems, ensuring information and planning records are readily available as required. This will include MyConcern in those schools where it is used.
- The school will ensure there is ready access to information and up to date contact details for carers, parents (where appropriate), social worker and the named contact in the Virtual School.
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving school promptly if there is a transfer to another school.
- Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of the school staff team. We are guided by best practice and on the 'need to know'. Wherever possible students' wishes are taken into account in sharing information within the staff team.
- The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After will attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to the statutory LAC review process.

## 9 Appointments of Staff

- The school recognises that there is a statutory requirement to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.
- All staff and governors have a responsibility for the educational achievement and well-being of LAC as a corporate parent. The work of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is to lead in this area, but they do not hold sole responsibility.

## 10 Staff and Governors' Development and Training

- All Staff and governors are encouraged to develop via reflective processes. We encourage ongoing engagement with relevant CPD to maintain and extend individual and team expertise in supporting LAC to progress.
- The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After makes particular efforts to develop good awareness and understanding of issues, guidance and developments associated with the LAC context. The Designated Person for LAC disseminates knowledge and skills to colleagues in school as appropriate and necessary. Partnership working and collaboration with the Local Authority and the Virtual School is essential here.
- There is a specific statutory expectation that the Designated Person for LAC will be released to attend a programme of training each year to maintain and extend his or her personal expertise.
- The governor for LAC will attend appropriate briefings and relevant development opportunities provided by the Local Authority and the Virtual School.

## 11 Partnership Working

- Our school values the views of carers and parents. We firmly believe in developing strong partnerships with carers, parents and residential care workers to enable students to achieve their potential.
- We will develop close relationships and collaborative work to promote the learning and well-being of individual children, both in and out of school.
- ePEP meetings, other school liaison and consultation processes and informal day to day dialogue are all seen as good opportunities to enhance our partnerships.

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- We recognise the essential contributions that external support services make in assisting LAC. We commit to developing positive partnerships with all involved. Our partnerships with community partners are extensive; some of our key partners for these children include:

**Main links-** Foster carers, residential key workers, social workers, family support workers, Head of Virtual School

**Other Local Authority Services-** Educational psychologists, SEN team, behaviour support, learning support, medical officer, school nurses, CAMH, Education Welfare Officers, social care sessional staff, community care workers, residential care staff, youth offending service, locality team workers, independent review officers, advocacy services

### Further Information

Keeping children safe in education Sept 2022

[Keeping children safe in education 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Working Together to safeguard children 2018

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities: February 2018

[The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local authorities: February 2018

[Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)