

Littleover Community School



and Sixth Form Centre

Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) Policy

March 2026

School Leader	Mark Pestell
Link Governor	James Law

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By:	Senior Leadership Team	Signed:	

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Purpose

Littleover Community School strive to ensure that Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional academic and pastoral support in order to ensure they thrive.

We work closely with Derby City Virtual School to ensure that our practice is informed and inclusive whilst supporting need, at the point of need, in accordance with DfE statutory guidance which includes:

1. Admission authorities are required, with some limited exceptions, to give priority to Looked-after Children, children adopted from care under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and those who left care under a 'Special Guardianship Order' or 'Residence Order' in their oversubscription criteria. The practical effect of this is that in a school's published admission arrangements, the first and highest oversubscription criterion must be Looked-After Children (see paragraph 1.7 of the Admissions Code).
2. The law gives a Local Authority that looks after a child the right to direct the admission authority of any maintained school to give them a place. This applies, even where the school is currently full, or is in another Local Authority area (see paragraph 3.19 of the School Admission Code).
3. Governing bodies of all maintained schools are required to appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of Looked-After Children who are on the school roll. At LCS this is Mr M Pestell.
4. Governing bodies must ensure, as a minimum, that:
 - a Designated Teacher is appointed;
 - the teacher undertakes appropriate training;
 - it considers an annual report from the Designated Teacher; and
 - it acts on any issues that the report raises.
5. Regulations specify that the role of a Designated Teacher should be carried out by:
 - a qualified teacher, within the meaning of section 132 of the Education Act 2002, who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required); or
 - the Headteacher or Acting Headteacher of the school.
6. Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 place duties on the governing body of a maintained school in England should:
 - designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of Previously Looked-After students who are no longer looked-after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
 - ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training; and
 - ensure they and the Designated Teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
7. All Looked-After Children have a personal education plan (PEP) as part of the care plan that is drawn up by the local authority that looks after them. The PEP forms part of the child's education record.

Legal Framework for Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-after Children

Looked-after Children:

The term 'looked-after' has a specific legal meaning, based on the Children Act 1989.

- The child is in accommodation commissioned and provided by the Local Authority for more than 24 hours.
- The child is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order, Interim Care Order or Care Order either living at home or placed away from home with relatives, friends or local authority carers.
- The child is remanded to Local Authority Care.
- The child is subject to a Secure Order under the Children Act 1989.
- The child is placed for adoption but the adoption order has not been made.
- The child is an unaccompanied minor.
- The child is in receipt of a series of Short Term Breaks as part of a Family Support plan for periods of 24 hours or more. (These children are only Looked-after for the time that they are placed away from home and do not need to be on your register of Looked-after Children; nor do they need Personal Education Plans.)

Care Order:

A child is looked-after when subject to a care order. There are no exceptions to this rule. In these circumstances however, there is no obligation for the local authority to accommodate the child. For example, a child under a care order can be placed with their parents or other relative.

A care order continues in force until either:

- they are discharged by a court
- the child reaches his/her 18th birthday
- the child leaves care through an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangement order.

A local authority cannot unilaterally end a care order, and therefore a child, once subject to a care order, will remain looked-after until one of the above events occurs. However, when a placement order is made the care order no longer has effect but is reactivated if the placement order is revoked.

Previously Looked-after Children:

A child is previously looked-after when:

- The child is no longer looked-after by a local authority because they are the subject of an adoption, a 'Special Guardianship Order' (SGO) or 'Child Arrangement Order'.
- The child is adopted from 'state care' outside of England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Key Staff

Our Designated Teacher is Mark Pestell

M.Pestell@littleover.derby.sch.uk

Our Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously Looked-After Children at our school. They are the initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Our Pastoral Support Mentor for LAC & PLAC is currently a vacant post and this policy will be updated once an appointment is made.

Role of the Designated Teacher

5.1 Leadership Responsibilities

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 including new admissions.
- Promote the educational achievement of every LAC & PLAC student 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 LAC & PLAC students 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 LAC & PLAC students.
- Promote a culture in which LAC & PLAC students are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working LAC & PLAC students.
- Work directly with LAC & PLAC students and their parents and carers to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of LAC students PEPs
- Work closely with the school's 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Involve parents and carers of Previously Looked-After Children in decisions affecting their child's education
- Analyses trends related to behaviour, attendance and academic progress which is then reported to SLT and governors on a half termly and annual basis respectively.

5.2 Supporting Looked-after Children

The Designated Teacher, with the support of the Pastoral Support Mentor, will:

- Handle the admission and transition of Looked-After Children when joining LCS.
- 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 or 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.

5.3 Supporting Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-after Children

The Designated Teacher, with the support of the Pastoral Support Mentor, will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and Previously Looked-After Children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses student premium funding.
- Work with VSHs to agree how student premium funding for Looked-After Children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- Help raise the awareness of parents and carers of Previously Looked-After Children about student premium funding and other support for these children.
- Play a key part in decisions on how Pupil Premium + funding is used to support Previously Looked-After Children.
- Encourage parents' and carers' involvement in deciding how Pupil Premium + 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 like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children, and make sure teachers 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 together with any education, health and care (EHC) plans 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 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.
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children.

5.4 Relationships Beyond School

The Designated Teacher, with the support of the Pastoral Support Mentor, 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 carers 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 carers.
- 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 carers before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC & PLAC students.

Staff at LCS are actively encouraged and supported to attend courses and termly 'LA Network Meetings' that helps them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to support LAC & PLAC students. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness with school staff and Governors of issues associated with LAC & PLAC students.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding is used to "close the gap" in educational outcomes between LAC & PLAC and their peers. PP+ funding for PLAC is accessed through the school's own budget. PP+ for LAC is accessed through the Local Authority who has parental responsibility for the LAC.

Allocation of PP+ funding will be in line with the LCS Pupil Premium Policy and also guidance from the Virtual School. This may include:

- private tuition
- music lessons
- trip contributions
- ICT provision

Admission Arrangements

Prior to a start date being confirmed information will be gathered from the students former school, their Social Worker and the Virtual School. This will help to inform what support will be put in place immediately to ensure a smooth transition process.

The Designated Teacher and Virtual School jointly have the duty to ensure the PEP takes place within 20 working days of a child or young person coming into care or changing school or 10 days in the case of an emergency placement. Where possible these will always be arranged to take place in person to best support the student but, where necessary, they may be facilitated online.

We will ensure that there is an effective plan in place to support new students both when they join LCS and beyond. This may include:

- An enhanced induction co-ordinated by the Designated Teacher, Pastoral Support Manager or Safeguarding Team.
- Regular check ins with their key named adult
- Contact with carers and social workers to celebrate early successes or address early concerns.

- Academic interventions to help them reach age related expectations
- Early funding requests from the PP+ allocation to ensure the appropriate support and resources are in place.

Monitoring the progress of LAC

The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 10 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement, attainment and progress of all LAC at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the Independent Reviewing Officer, Social Worker or Designated Teacher. The young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP. At LCS, completion of paperwork and allocation of PP+ resources for LAC/PLAC is coordinated by the Pastoral Support Mentor.

The Designated Teacher will know who all the LAC students are within the school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker, PEPs and attainment and progress data. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other Local Authorities. The school will flag LAC/PLAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Monitoring the progress of PLAC

The parental responsibility for a PLAC is with the adopted parent. There is no requirement to hold a PEP meeting for a PLAC but the school monitors and allocates PP+ funding for PLAC to meet the needs of the student.

The school encourages adopted parents to make themselves known so that PP+ funding can be gained by recording the student as PLAC on the January census return.

Ongoing support will be provided for all PLAC students via our Pastoral Support Mentor

Partnership working

We firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC & PLAC to achieve their potential. LAC Review meetings and PEP meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

We also recognise the important contribution external support services make in supporting P/LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual P/LAC:

- Derby City Virtual School for LAC
- Educational Psychologists and SEND services
- Adoption Support workers
- medical officers
- school nurses
- The LA named nurse for Looked-after Children
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social Care Workers/ Children's Practitioners/ Residential Child Care Worker
- Youth Offending Service
- Multi-Agency Teams.
- External education providers.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's provision for LAC & PLAC

This policy will be reviewed annually. A report from the Designated Teacher on outcome of LAC & PLAC students is brought to the Governing body annually.

APPENDIX 1 – Key National Documents

- Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked-After Children - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities February 2018
- The Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- The Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children- Statutory Guidance February 2018
- Governance handbook for trustees of academies and multi-academy trusts and governors of maintained schools DfE January 2017 (6.4.12 Looked-after Children)
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, as amended.
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England - A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion, 2012
- Department for Education, School Admissions Code, Feb 2012

Supporting Looked-after Learners - A Practical Guide for School Governors

Contact details for LCS DT and associated staff responsible for LAC/PLAC are:

Designated Teacher - Mr M Pestell

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Email m.pestell@littleover.derby.sch.uk

Derby City Virtual School for LAC Contact Details

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Virtual School also has a role in supporting and giving information for PLAC to parents/carers, schools, social workers and other relevant persons.