



SCHOOL POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (PLAC)

Hasmonean Multi-Academy Trust (The 'Trust') recognises that LAC and PLAC can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting. We are committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We recognise that LAC and PLAC may have faced significant trauma in the form of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) including abuse, neglect, loss and/or rejection. When children are exposed to these adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their learning, as well as on their ability to think and to interact with others.

Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, national progress and attainment data clearly shows that LAC and PLAC are at greater risk of exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

The Trust believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every LAC and PLAC can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that LAC and PLAC can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

School can be a source of stability for children who may have been subject to emotional distress and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and thrive.

LAC children are those (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions.

PLAC are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order). PLAC also includes those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

‘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.

Our school community aims to champion the needs of LAC and PLAC to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care. We have a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for our LAC and PLAC.

We endeavour to create an environment where LAC and PLAC have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through the ‘local school offer’, identified by the school ‘audit of need’, and funded by the generic Pupil Premium Grant (PPG).

We promote staff training in the specific needs of LAC and PLAC, and trauma recovery in particular, so that all members of staff are sensitive to issues, and feel able to support the children discreetly and confidentially, as needs arise.

We ensure that personal education plans (PEPs) are completed within timescale, with multi-agency representation, as appropriate, and record previous and current attainment data, with

consideration of levels of progress. Decisions about spending of the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) are based on the need identified via the PEP process and will be used to accelerate learning and narrow learning gaps. We publish details on our website of how the school spends its Pupil Premium allocation and the effect this has had on the attainment of the students who attract the funding.

NB: This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with the School's Pupil Premium Proposal for LAC and PLAC which can be found on the school website.

1. OUR AIMS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN:

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is always central to the planning, and all members of staff understand the specific needs of LAC and PLAC
- To narrow the gap between the attainment of LAC and PLAC and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress
- That they benefit from interventions which are part of the 'school offer', and funded via the generic Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)
- That careful consideration is given at the PEP meeting to the spending of the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP), based on attainment data, levels of progress and the wider interests of the young person
- For all LAC and PLAC to have a minimum of two PEP meetings in an academic year, and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress
- For all members of staff to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with at least one key member of staff identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school and home
- That the key member of staff:
 - i. identifies at least one member of staff with whom the child feels safe
 - ii. identifies and shares the helpful relational qualities of this member of staff with the network of adults working with the student and
 - iii. increases the number of safe members of staff for the child
- That at least one safe space is identified in the classroom and in the School
- That school systems facilitate discreet support, as appropriate
- LAC will be advantaged within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for

- LAC and their foster families will feel part of the School community; they will be actively welcomed, in recognition of the particular needs of this group

2. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR LAC AND PLAC

2.1 Personal education plans for LAC

The school will ensure that every LAC on roll has a minimum of two PEP meetings every academic year, within the statutory care planning framework, with PEPs reviewed termly in order that the education planning for LAC remains up to date and 'live'. Additional PEP meetings are recognised as good practice for those children of particular concern. These will take place in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals.

Interventions accessed via the generic PP and spending of the PPP are recorded on the PEP.

We will work with social workers to ensure that PEPs are completed in advance of care planning meetings so that the PEP is available to Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) a minimum of three days before the care planning review in recognition that a care plan is incomplete without a completed PEP and health plan.

PLAC – On ceasing to be LAC the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC ("the DT") will consider what is best for continuity and meeting the child's educational needs bearing in mind their duty to promote their educational attainment.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher and the Local Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for LAC and PLAC. They will ensure that the **DT** has qualified teacher status, with appropriate experience to fulfil this statutory role. They will monitor the role of the designated teacher to ensure that all LAC and PLAC make accelerated and rapid progress, and that all staff receive appropriate training.

The named Local Governor for LAC and PLAC at the Boys' School is Mr J Goldberg.

The names Local Governor for LAC and PLAC at the Girls' School is Mrs S Solomon.

The **Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC** is Mr A Markiewicz (Boys' School) and Mrs M Sutton (Girls' School). They will promote improved educational life chances for LAC/PLAC by:

- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- developing expertise in the field of LAC/PLAC, especially in trauma recovery
- providing training and offering advice to school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for LAC/PLAC
- regularly reporting to the Headteacher and the Local Governing Body on the attainment of LAC/PLAC, school resource and staff training needs for working with this group (via the annual report to the Local Governors)
- prioritising LAC/PLAC for school-based additional support via the 'school offer' and PPP.
- maintaining positive links and access support from the LA Virtual school for LAC/PLAC

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for LAC/PLAC by:

- reading the *school policy* and *school policy guidance document* for LAC/PLAC
- attending training, as appropriate, referring to the designated teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating a 'LAC/PLAC -friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for LAC/PLAC by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available funded by the generic PP.

Statutory Guidance on the role and responsibilities of the DT can be found: [here](#)

2.3 Attendance

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of LAC/PLAC to ensure that all children have good attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals as an early intervention, outlined in the attendance policy. The school provides attendance information on LAC/PLAC to the local authority via Welfare Call.

2.4 Admissions / Transitions

School procedures to support LAC/PLAC during admission and transition include:

- Prioritising LAC/PLAC at the point of admission
- The swift transfer of information between schools
- Early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy
- Additional support for LAC /PLAC at times of transition
- Structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

Further details can be found in the school's admissions arrangements, which are published on the Trust's website.

2.5 Additional educational needs

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for LAC/PLAC with additional educational needs by:

- Having high expectations. Ensuring that they are prioritised for additional support via the 'school offer', funded by the generic PP; identifying further support, funded by the PPP
- Ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- Ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight (*in line with the Lamb report, December 2009*)
- Ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, with an expectation of a minimum of two sub-levels progress each academic year

2.6 Special educational needs

The DT will ensure that:

- The SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, as it relates to LAC, is followed;
- Children's PEPs work in harmony with their EHC plan to coherently and comprehensively set out how their needs are being met.
- With the help of the Virtual School Head (VSH), they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable.

All staff will:

- endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for LAC/PLAC who have special educational needs by having high expectations, ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision (*in line with the SEND Code of Practice and the School's SEN policy*).
- Ensure that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic, ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice and the Trust's SEN policy, while ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight.

2.7 Safeguarding

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on LAC/PLAC by familiarising themselves with the '*School policy guidance for LAC*' and following the school's child protection policy if there are safeguarding concerns.

2.8 Bullying

School staff recognise the vulnerability of this group to experiencing bullying due to their looked after status and are vigilant to recognise early signs and address them immediately, in line with the school bullying policy. We also understand that children and young people who have experienced abuse and/or neglect resulting in developmental trauma are more likely to exhibit behaviours that could be perceived as bullying when they are feeling unsafe and become unregulated. Staff work to create a safe environment where children are supported in developing self-regulation skills which in turn will reduce incidences of bullying. We are mindful of the susceptibility of this group to feelings of rejection and will work with children and their carers to manage any incidences sensitively and to avoid exclusion. We will inform the Social Worker and the Virtual School Head from the LA with specific responsibility for LAC/PLAC if any bullying incidents occur.

2.9 Voice of the child

The voice of the child will be listened to in making decisions. This is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting the needs of LAC and PLAC. Knowing and having a good relationship with their designated teacher is one of the most important factors in supporting LAC and PLAC at school.

2.10 Mental Health

Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, fetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.

The DT will be alert to signs of potential issues and will understand where the school can draw on specialist services, such as CAMHS and educational psychologists. They will work with the DSL and the school counsellor to support LAC and PLAC.

2.11 Relationships beyond the school

The family arrangements for looked-after children can be complex. Most will live with foster carers, some will live in residential children's homes, some will live with family members, and some, in very limited circumstances, may continue to live with their parents. The designated teacher will work with the child's social worker and will liaise with other agencies such as CAMHS as appropriate. The DT will discuss with the child's social worker 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. The DT will encourage those who have parental responsibility to be actively involved in their child's education.

2.12 Working with local authorities

The designated teacher will work closely with the VSH and will make sure that:

- the latest information about educational progress, primarily through the PEP, is available to contribute to the statutory review process of the care plan;
- mechanisms are in place to identify and inform the VSH where looked after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate action to safeguard the child;
- any decision about changes in care placements which will disrupt a child's education or training is discussed with the child's social worker and/or others in the local authority, such as the VSH or other local authority officer, regarding any decision about changes in care placements which will disrupt a child's education or training;

- provide advice in such cases about the likely impact of disrupting the child's education and what the local authority should do in order to minimise the disruption if a move in educational placement cannot be avoided;
- make sure that if a looked-after child moves school the designated teacher at the new school is provided with any information they need to help the transition process.

2.13 Working with parents and carers

The DT will ensure that:

- there is an agreed process in place for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as the child's social worker, in order to review and develop the child's educational progress and how each person will contribute to driving up the child's educational achievement;
- school policies in relation to, for example, home-school agreements, timekeeping and attendance, and homework diaries and parents' evenings are communicated to carers and social workers and, where appropriate, birth parents, so that looked-after children are not disadvantaged;
- the child's teachers know the most appropriate person to contact when necessary. For example, in some cases authority to sign permission slips for school trips will be delegated to the carer by the social worker but for some children permission will be needed from the child's social worker.

2.14 Exclusion

We recognize that the past experiences of LAC and PLAC can impact on their behaviour. This will be an important consideration when looking at how best to support the child or young person with their learning in the design and application of the school's behaviour policies. In line with the DfE's statutory guidance on Exclusions the Head Teacher will make every effort to avoid excluding LAC/PLAC This is in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. If a LAC or PLAC is at risk of any period of exclusion, the DT will:

- contact the Virtual School Head ("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.
- work with the VSH and child's carers, to consider what additional assessment and support (such as additional help for the classroom teacher or one-to-one therapeutic work) needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour and

prevent the need for the exclusion; and, in the case of PLAC, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking the advice of the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

If any period of exclusion is unavoidable, we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. We will also work with the LA to arrange alternative provision from the first day following exclusion (Department for Education's 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' 2015; Sec 3, para 46). School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of LAC.

2.15 Multi-agency working

School staff will make every effort to engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to perform their roles successfully and make a positive impact on the education and wider needs of LAC.

The Headteacher, designated teacher and the Local Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Reviewed by VWV, AM & MS October 2023

Ratified by the designated governors

Review date: October 2024