



# Looked-after and previously looked-after children policy

This is a Melland High School Policy

**Ratified by Governing Body:** *June 2021*

**Reviewed:** *March 2021*

**Next Review Date:** *March 2024*

# Looked-after and previously looked-after children policy

## Rationale

Melland High School is dedicated to providing a positive, varied and enriched educational experience for all looked-after and previously looked-after children (LAC) and strives to ensure a high level of progress and achievement from our looked-after and previously looked-after children.

LAC and previously LAC are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared with their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- A high level of disruption in home life.
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities and experiences.

### The above may result in:

- Poor examination success rates in comparison with the general population.
- Poor attendance rates in comparison with the general population.
- Underachievement in further and higher education, employment or training.

## Aims

- To promote and support the educational achievement and welfare of LAC and previously LAC.
- To ensure all staff are informed of the specific needs of LAC and previously LAC.
- To ensure equality of opportunity for LAC and previously LAC.
- To achieve continuity and stability for and previously LAC.
- To involve LAC and previously LAC in their education.
- To support LAC and previously LAC into appropriate further education, employment or training.

## Definition of looked-after and previously looked-after children

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/s, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and

A child who is looked-after is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked-after by the local authority if he, or she, is in their

care or provided with accommodation for more than twenty-four hours by the Local Authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20).
- Children who are the subjects of a legal care order (section 31), or interim care order (section 38).
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44/46).
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the Local Authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a legal care order by the courts under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989. They may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the Local Authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. They may live in foster care, in a Children's Home or in a residential school. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days per year.

All these groups are said to be 'Looked-after Children' – LAC. They may be looked-after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

## Entitlement of looked-after children

All LAC will be entitled to:

- A dedicated Designated Teacher and pastoral support.
- Priority entry to extra-curricular clubs and activities.
- Priority access to careers advice.
- Priority places on educational school trips and visits (N.B. not holidays.)

## Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for looked-after children

In all academies, a Designated Teacher for LAC will be named. The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are to:

- Cultivate and maintain a culture of high aspiration for LAC and previously LAC.
- Be an advocate for LAC and previously LAC within the Academy.
- Ensure that each LAC has a known and preferred member of staff that they can talk to.
- Know who all the LAC and previously LAC in the Academy are, including those in the care of other authorities. Records / PEPs should be kept in accordance with Safeguarding procedures.
- Attend relevant training about meeting the needs of LAC.
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC.
- Ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering the Academy.

- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed before their first statutory LAC Review from going into care and ensure that the pupil/student contributes to the plan.
- Track and monitor LAC achievement, progress and attendance.
- Keep PEPs and other records up-to-date and review PEPs at transfer and within relevant timescales according to the accommodating LA.
- **The designated safeguarding lead has details of the of the legal status of each individual looked after child's care arrangements and what the contact arrangements are with birth parents or those with Parental responsibility. They will also know the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.**
- **Promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his/her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers.**
- All Pupil information should be kept in accordance with the Academy Safeguarding Procedures.
- Convene a multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties, or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils/students, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil/student.
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for LAC.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement.
- Contribute information to LAC reviews, when required.
- Report, at least annually, to the Governing body on LAC and previously LAC in the school and inform relevant policy and practice development.
- To offer all staff advice and strategies to effectively meet the needs of all LAC and previously LAC to ensure high levels of achievement and attendance.
- Ensure LAC and previously LAC are a priority for appropriate and quality one-to-one support, if required.
- The Designated Teacher should ensure that the PEP includes information about how the LAC will benefit the way in which Pupil Premium funding is used to raise attainment.

## Responsibilities of all staff

As with all pupils/students, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of LAC and previously LAC.

- Be familiar with guidance on the education of LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher when a LAC and previously LAC is experiencing difficulty.

### Heads of Subject / Heads of Department should:

- Track LAC and previously LAC as key cohort
- Prioritise LAC for intervention and support.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed on LAC and previously LAC progress.

### **Heads of Year / Senior Leaders and dedicated pastoral support staff should:**

- Provide additional support for LAC and previously LAC where needed.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed of any pastoral concerns affecting the welfare, achievement and attendance of the LAC.

## **Responsibilities of the governing body**

The governing body of Melland High School is committed to providing quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises that nationally there is educational underachievement of looked-after children, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice as outlined in the statutory guidance.

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 places a duty on the governing body to designate a member of staff (the Designated Teacher) as having responsibility to promote the educational achievements of looked-after children who are registered pupils at the school. This includes those aged between 16 and 18. The governing body and all the staff at Melland High School are committed to ensuring that all LAC and previously LAC achieve, are challenged and enjoy school. In doing so well we all have key roles and responsibilities:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the latest Admissions Code of Conduct.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC and previously LAC.
- Ensure there is a named, Designated Teacher for LAC who is allocated time to fulfil their role with LAC and previously LAC.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is a member of teaching staff with appropriate seniority, professional experience and status.
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC and previously LAC who liaises with the Designated Teacher.
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.

### **Ensure that the Academy's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:**

- Curriculum and public examinations/accreditation.
- Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities.
- Work experience and careers guidance.
- Ensure the Designated Teacher undertakes relevant training.
- **Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually, and at least every three years.**

## **Admission arrangements**

- Each academy will ensure LAC are prioritised in the school's over-subscription criteria.
- On admission, records will be requested from the LAC's previous school.

- A meeting will be held with carers/parents/social workers, as appropriate, to complete the baseline information to inform the LAC's PEP.
- A home/school agreement will be drawn up with the primary carer.
- An appropriate school induction will take place.

## Allocation of resources

The DfE Guidance is clear that the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for LAC, must be used by schools for the benefit of the child's educational needs as outlined in their PEP. The impact of the PPG must be measurable and evidenced.

## Training

The Principal, Designated Teacher and Professional Development Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the latest regulations and practices outlined in good practice and national guidelines documentation.

## Exclusion

We make every effort to avoid excluding a LAC, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from school, due to their early experience of broken attachment and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Advisor from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of LAC and Post LAC.

We will ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC.

## References

The Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children – Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities. DfE February 2018

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children – Statutory guidance for local authorities, virtual school heads, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. DfE March 2014.

Guidance documents on Manchester City Council website. ([www.manchester.gov.uk](http://www.manchester.gov.uk))

DfE Exclusion from Maintained schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England: Statutory Guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion. September 2017