



'Learn, Endeavour, Aspire, Respect, Nurture'

Oxspring Primary School

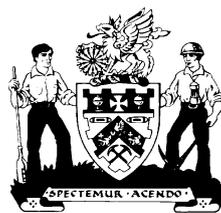
Head Teacher: Mrs S. Irwin

Chair of Governors: Mr M. Cassidy

Revised: September 2020

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2021

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (PLAC) POLICY



BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Our School's Mission

'To be a learning community with a culture of ambition and achievement'

Our Vision

'Embracing Learning - a school for all'

Our Values



Oxspring Primary School

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Safeguarding Policy which is integral to the support of the children and staff within the school community. Child protection is at the heart of the happiness and safety of our young people at Oxspring.

Oxspring Primary School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care and is committed to providing quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Promoting the education of looked after (LAC) and previously looked after children" (2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

See also DFE Guidance for the LAC and PLAC Designated Teacher (2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

- The **Designated Teacher** for LAC / PLAC: Mrs Helen Rolling SENDCO
- Link Governor with responsibility for LAC and PLAC :Safeguarding Governor Ms Marie Hollingworth

The Governing Body and staff are committed to providing quality education for all of its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that LAC / PLAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- Ensure that carers and social workers of LAC/ PLAC pupils are kept fully informed of the child's progress and attainment
- Ensure that LAC / PLAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Who are Looked After Children?

LAC children may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. They may be accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents, be the subjects of a care order or an interim care order, the subject of an emergency order for their protection or compulsorily accommodated within the criminal justice system

Who are Previously Looked After Children?

Previously Looked After Children are those who (DFE definition):

- are no longer Looked After by a Local Authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order;
- were adopted from 'state care' outside 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.

Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) may or may not have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/cognitive development
- bullying (either victim or perpetrator)
- prone to mental health issues
- isolated with few friends
- behavioural difficulties
- poor attachments to others
- a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. The Governing Body of Oxspring Primary School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible

Virtual School Heads (VSHs)

Looked-after and previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs. The LA Virtual School Heads (VSHs) have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential - an important part of why this role was made statutory.

- For looked-after children, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH needs to be the educational advocate that parents are for others.
- For previously looked-after children, the VSH will be a source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible. VSHs are not acting as part of the corporate parent role in these circumstances but are there to promote the educational achievement of these children through the provision of advice and information to relevant parties listed in *Previously looked after-children*.

Objectives

Oxspring Primary School will support LAC and PLAC by:

- ensuring an effective induction for the child & carer when joining the school, or for the carer when a child who is already on the school roll comes into care
- balancing high levels of teaching and learning support with academic challenge
- ensuring that each child has a high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- linking each child to a key person they relate well to
- making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities (including the Virtual School Head (VSH)) and specialist agencies
- encouraging LAC and PLAC to take responsibility for their learning, and giving them the necessary support
- engaging LAC and PLAC in learning, outside the classroom and in after-school activities
- intervening promptly if a problem emerges (e.g. behaviour or attendance)
- giving integrated but low-profile support in school to each LAC and PLAC so that they are not made to feel different from other children
- planning for future transitions (e.g. to secondary school)

Admissions Arrangements

On admission, the student's records will be requested from his/her previous school / setting and a meeting held with the parent/carer/social worker as appropriate. There should always be someone with parental responsibility involved in such a meeting. This will generate information to inform the PEP. In every other aspect, admission and induction should follow the school normal admission procedure and policy.

Responsibility for LAC / PLAC in School

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with LAC / PLAC are aware s/he is being / has been looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of information should be that of the Headteacher and designated teacher for LAC / PLAC. It is appropriate for a learning support assistant to have knowledge that a young person is being looked after or PLAC only when s/he is directly involved in the teaching of that young person. In the absence of the class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher 'covering' the class, wherever practicable.

Pupil premium plus (PP+) for looked-after children

Looked-after children are one of the groups of pupils that attract PP+ funding. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after children and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Local authorities receive a PP+ grant allocation based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August, as recorded in the latest looked-after children data return.

VSHs, working with education settings, should implement PP+ arrangements for all looked-after children, in need of support for whom the authority is responsible, in accordance with the latest conditions of grant published by the department and any supplementary departmental advice it issues. VSHs have considerable flexibility in the use of PP+ funding in order to maximise its impact for individual looked-after children as well as the whole looked-after cohort. All VSHs should publish a clear policy on their use of PP+, including how they decide the level and use of top-sliced funding.

Arrangements for PP+ should be as un-bureaucratic as possible, whilst providing for strong transparency and accountability. Ofsted's framework for Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services requires inspectors to ask for the Virtual School Annual Report. The Virtual School Annual Report should include:

- details of how the VSH has managed the PP+ and Early Years Pupil Premium for looked-after children; and
- evidence of how the VSH's spending of the premium has supported the achievement of the children looked-after by their local authority, including clearly setting out how top sliced funding has supported this.

The PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for looked-after children. VSH should seek the input of the school's designated teacher and carers when deciding on how to use PP+ to support a child. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence-based and in the best interests of the child.

PP+ funding for previously looked after children is allocated directly to and managed by their school. Both VSH and schools manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked after or previously looked after children and according to children's needs. It is not a personal budget for individual children; however, both VSHs and schools may choose to allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs

Monitoring the progress of LAC / PLAC

Each LAC / PLAC will have a Care Plan, which will include a PEP. The social worker will take the lead in developing the Care Plan.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All LAC / PLAC must have a care plan drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP); this forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document. There will be discussion about how the child, the school and the Local Authority can together ensure that through the content, implementation and review of the PEP, the child achieves well. These meetings will involve the young person concerned, the parents/carers, the social worker, a teacher and other professionals, as appropriate. It will identify specific areas of concern and define achievable targets.

Areas to be considered could include:

- Attendance
- Achievement record
- Behaviour
- Homework
- Effort
- Social Adjustment
- Involvement in extra-curricular activity
- Special Education Needs (if any)
- Development needs (short or long) in terms of skills, knowledge and/or subject area expertise
- Plans and targeted aspirations

The PEP will be updated at least every six months as part of the statutory reviewing process carried out by the Social Services Department. If the child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC / PLAC:

- o LAC teams
- o Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- o medical officers
- o school nurses
- o CAMHS
- o Education Welfare Officers
- o Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- o Youth Offending Service

When children already on school roll enter care, the school will ensure that they meet the Designated Teacher as soon as possible, and that the child and his/her parents/carers are made aware of the school's procedures and additional support arrangements. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and a PEP will be prepared as soon as possible; we will follow the procedure adopted for those children at the school who are already in care.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips and other such activities. At this meeting all means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed; this might include a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in the child's circumstances.

Many LAC and PLAC do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel 'different'. We will discuss this with the child, and agree who should be aware of his/her care status; however, we recognise that in some cases - for example, if the child has a severe learning difficulty - this may not be possible.

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- ensure that admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC / PLAC according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC / PLAC
- liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC / PLAC are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC / PLAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC / PLAC equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
 - work experience and careers guidance
 - annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC.
 - ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC.

At Oxspring Primary School, we will do for Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) what we do for all children, only more so. We aim to ensure that LAC and PLAC excel, as we aim for all children to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, and also to understand that they have control over their destiny and that education does matter. We will listen to what LAC and PLAC tell us about what they want from their education, and we will try to address any concerns or issues raised. Oxspring Primary School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school, pupils are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Specific Support

One-to-one Tuition

All LAC are entitled to extra support as part of a government scheme; this includes one-to-one tuition in English and/or Maths even if they appear to be reaching expected levels of attainment. The school is committed to prioritising all LAC for this tuition.

Additional funding

As outlined above, LAC and PLAC are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Eligibility for such funding and the sums of money available will be determined in line with government policy. The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding, where available, for all eligible LAC and PLAC on roll to provide additional, personalised support and ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes. The appropriate use of allocated funding will be assessed by reference to the Personal Education Plan.

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that LAC and PLAC enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving places for them on trips and other enrichment activities which they are eligible for and by allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. Responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities lies with the social worker, although this is often delegated to carers. The person who may give permission will be identified at the first PEP meeting. If there is any uncertainty, we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Helping to build a child's portfolio of memorabilia

LAC may experience many moves and become dislocated from their pasts. School may be one of the few places where they may safely gather up and record things they have done, have made and have become.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that all LAC make a comprehensive portfolio of memorabilia recording stages in their lives at school for them to keep - for example, photographs of themselves and their friends in teams, at play and in class (if appropriate), and special pieces of work (e.g. paintings, poems or models), along with key milestones and achievements.

The role of the Head Teacher

- To ensure that, in partnership with the Governing Body, the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and update the necessary skills, knowledge and training needed to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of LAC and PLAC
- To make sure that the Designated Teacher role deepens the understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting children in care to achieve
- In partnership with the Governing Body, to monitor the effectiveness of the role of the Designated Teacher
- To oversee the development of the policy on LAC and PLAC
- To evaluate the standards and achievement of LAC and PLAC and report these termly to the Governing Body
- To ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses that will help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support LAC and PLAC

The role of the Designated Teacher within the school

- To take lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things that affect how LAC and PLAC learn and achieve
- To promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how LAC and PLAC learn
- To promote the educational achievement of every LAC and PLAC on the school's roll
- To contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put LAC or PLAC at a disadvantage

- To ensure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support LAC and PLAC learning
- To ensure that the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- To be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and making full use of Assessment for Learning (AFL)
- To ensure that LAC and PLAC are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that parents/carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- To have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the school
- To set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all LAC and PLAC, and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- To act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health, and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties
- To ensure that the school file for LAC and PLAC holds all the essential information
- To ensure that the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- To be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and making full use of Assessment for Learning (AFL)
- To ensure that LAC and PLAC are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that parents/carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- To have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the school
- To set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all LAC and PLAC, and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- To act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health, and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties
- To ensure that the school file for LAC and PLAC holds all the essential information
- To arrange for a mentor or peer mentor for each LAC or PLAC on the school roll.

The role of all staff

- To ensure that all LAC and PLAC are made to feel welcome and included
- To have high expectations of LAC and PLAC's involvement in learning and educational progress
- To be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families
- To understand the reasons which may be behind a LAC or PLAC's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children
- To understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC as individuals and not publicly treat them differently from their peers
- To appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a LAC or PLAC's status
- To understand both what a PEP is, and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers - and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself - and an understanding of what everyone needs to do to help the child's achieve his or her potential

Confidentiality

Information on LAC and PLAC will be shared with school staff on a "need to know basis". The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP

meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Oxspring Primary School is committed to working towards equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life. The school will work to ensure that the policy and programme is relevant to everyone regardless of gender, culture, faith, race, academic ability, sexuality or sexual orientation.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> and Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

We comply with this guidance and the procedures set out by Barnsley's Safeguarding Children Partnership. <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/safeguarding-families-in-barnsley/safeguarding-children-in-barnsley/barnsley-safeguarding-children-partnership/>

Appendix 1 – Definitions

Looked-After Children (LAC) are those who are in the care of a local authority, or are being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions.

Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) are those who immediately after being in care (as defined above) became subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

A **Special Guardianship Order (SGO)** appoints one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s)

A **Child Arrangements Order** settles the arrangements of the person the child is to live with

Appendix 2 Complaints Procedure

If a young person, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the Designated Teacher, who will try to resolve the situation together with the parent/carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 working days, the young person, parent/carer or social worker may submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Head Teacher him/herself; in these circumstances, the complaint will go straight to the Chair of the school's Governing Body.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed in a meeting called to assess the impact of any such complaint on the child's education. Those attending the meeting may include the Governor with special responsibility for children in care and representatives of any outside agency whose presence is required by both parties. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head Teacher's response.

Pupils who wish to make a formal complaint against the school or about their care will be advised of the support available for children in care.