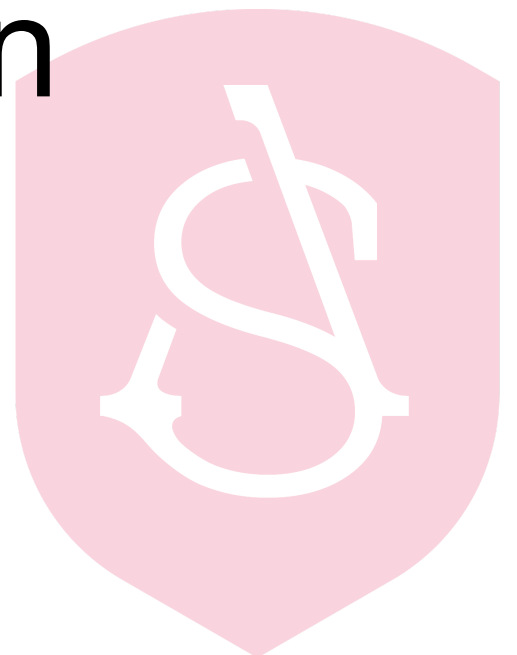


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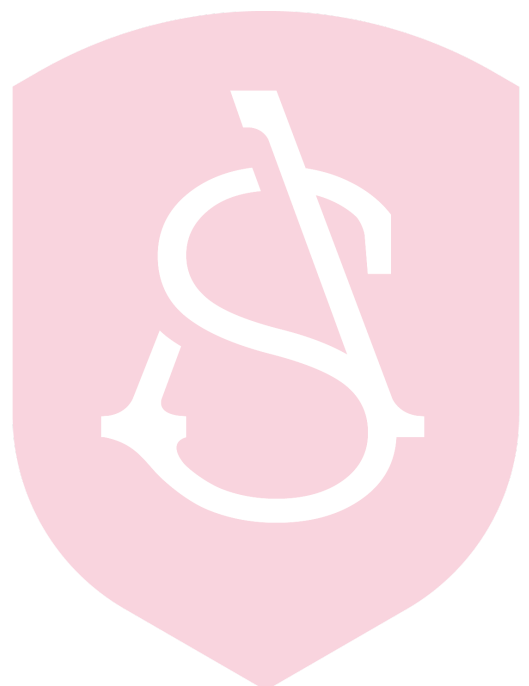
# Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy



May 2026

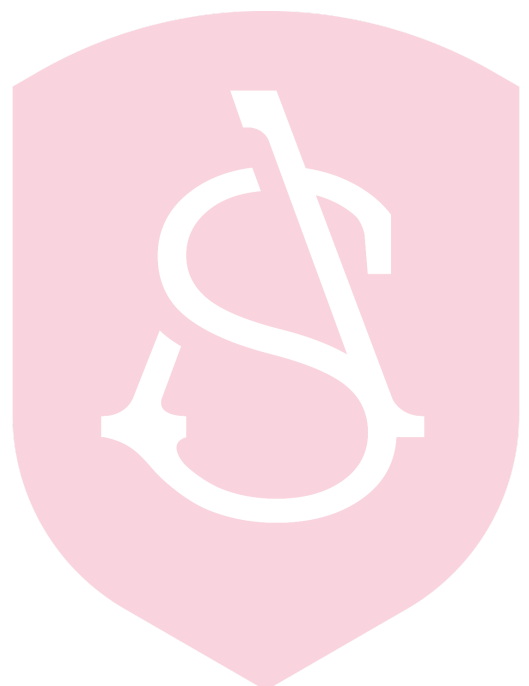
# Version Control

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## 1. Introduction and Aims:

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) / Designated Support Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children has statutory responsibilities as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025) and the Statutory Attendance Guidance (Working Together, 2024).

The Governors at Ashlawn School are committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Governors recognise the need to champion performance, for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and are committed to improving outcomes for them.

In accordance with the Children Act 1989, a student is defined as a Looked-After Child (LAC) if they are in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, a local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours. This legal status encompasses children who are the subject of a statutory Care Order (Section 31), where the local authority shares parental responsibility with the parents, as well as those accommodated under a voluntary agreement (Section 20). Within this framework, the school explicitly recognises students in formal kinship care arrangements, where a child is placed with relatives or friends who have been assessed and approved as local authority foster carers. Whether residing in foster care, residential settings, or with family under local authority supervision, these students are entitled to the full support of the Virtual School and a statutory Personal Education Plan (PEP) to ensure their educational outcomes are prioritized.

All staff are committed to ensuring that LAC and PLAC are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

1. A Designated Governor for LAC and PLAC (The Safeguarding Governor)
2. A Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC
3. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all LAC
4. The Designated Teacher, as a minimum, will have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of LAC and PLAC
5. The Designated Teacher will have enough time to fulfil the requirements of their role (e.g. attending PEP and LAC meetings, completing ePEP)
6. All staff in school will have a clear understanding of the issues that affect LAC and PLAC; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality
7. Policies, procedures and strategies to promote the achievement and well-being of this vulnerable group

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

It also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

It also takes into account [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

## 3. Definitions

**Looked-after children** are registered pupils that are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

**Previously looked-after children** are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:
  - o A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
  - o A special guardianship order
  - o An adoption order
- They appear to the governing board to have:
  - o Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
  - o Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

**Personal education plan (PEP)** is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

**Virtual school head (VSH)** is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents, carers and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

#### 4. Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is Rosie Bassnett-Barker.

You can contact them by emailing [bassnettbarkerr@ashlawn.tlet.org.uk](mailto:bassnettbarkerr@ashlawn.tlet.org.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 your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Our Designated Teacher is supported by other key staff, including Evie Bundyford, who is the Designated Support Teacher for Looked After Children. You can contact Miss Bundyford by emailing [bundyforde@ashlawn.tlet.org.uk](mailto:bundyforde@ashlawn.tlet.org.uk).

#### 5. The role of the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

##### 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
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
  - o Working with VSHs
  - o Promoting a whole-school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
  - o The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
  - o How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils

- Contribute to the development and review of whole-school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their parents, carers and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's 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 guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

## 5.2 Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- 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 pupils
- Ensure that:
  - o 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
  - o 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
  - o The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and 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 both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and how to support them
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents, carers and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging them to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previously looked-after children

- Encourage parents', carers' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus 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 such as 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 other staff 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 in harmony 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 how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, 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
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

#### 5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher 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, carers and guardians 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:
  - o Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
  - o 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
  - o 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
  - o 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 guardians
- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
  - o 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

- o School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
- o 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:
  - o 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
  - o 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, carers or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

## 6. Roles and responsibilities of all staff

All staff in this school will:

- have high expectations of LAC and PLAC's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour.
- understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their in-care or previously in-care status.
- appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported.
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.
- for PLAC, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.
- adopt trauma-informed approaches to behavior management, recognising that traditional sanctions may be counter-productive for children with significant early-life trauma.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

