




# Looked After and Previously Looked After Child Policy

**Bridgewater High School part of The Challenge Academy Trust**

**Member Academies:**

- Beamont Collegiate Academy
- Bridgewater High School
- Broomfields Junior School
- Great Sankey Primary School
- Meadowside Community Primary School
- Padgate Academy
- Penketh High School
- Penketh South Primary School
- Priestley College
- Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School

Version	Date	Action
1	21.6.22	Approved Safeguarding, PD, Behaviour & Welfare Committee  G Bratley Chair
2	10.10.23	Updates Approved by Safeguarding, PD, Behaviour & Welfare Committee
3		

## AIM

TCAT academies are committed to providing access to excellent education and opportunities to enrich the lives of our children and young people. All our academies are committed to finding

ways to overcome barriers that may be faced by children who are looked after or previously have been.

### **Legislation & Statutory Guidance:**

This policy is written in accordance with current government statutory DfE guidance:

['Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children'](#)  
[February 2018](#)

['The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children'](#)  
[February 2018](#)

### **Definition**

For the purpose of succinctness the acronyms LAC and PLAC are widely used. To avoid any negative connotations of LAC, TCAT schools within their day-to-day operation will use 'Looked After Child' and 'Previously Looked After Child'.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours. They include the following:

- children who are accommodated by the LA under a voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20).
- children who are the subject of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (section 38).
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (Section 44).
- 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.

Children in care may live with foster carers, in a children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or even with parents under supervision of Children's Services.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school.

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.

A **PLAC** (Previously Looked After Child) is one who is no longer looked after because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live.

It is also important to note that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority/and or parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is sometimes delegated to foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers.

## **Designated Teacher for Looked After & Previously Looked after Children**

This policy reflects and should be read in conjunction with the DfE statutory guidance: *The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children*. Bridgewater's designated teacher is Mark Malam.

### **As one of the academies within TCAT Bridgewater's commitment to LAC & PLAC students is:**

Some children and young people who Looked After are in stable, long-term placements. However, despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, LAC are particularly vulnerable to academic underachievement. Nationally, LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. In 2022 the average attainment 8 score for LAC in England was 20.3 compared to 48.8 for non LAC.\* Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

TCAT recognises that LAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. TCAT recognises that LAC may have very specific needs and may be coping with having Adverse Childhood Experiences; trauma, abuse or rejection these children are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. \* It is of note that the percentage of LAC with an EHCP is 30.2% compared to 4.3% of the general child population.\*

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

### **Curriculum & Pastoral Support of Looked after Children**

TCAT's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of LAC is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher (Mark Malam) is appointed who will be responsible for all LAC.
- All LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require. The allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding will be used to ensure effective impact.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education.

- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of LAC.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Responsibility of the Principal/Head teacher**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC & PLAC (Mark Malam), whose role is set out below.
- To appoint another appropriate person quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave. In this case the Second Designated Safeguard Lead.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

### **Responsibility of the Governing Body**

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC.
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC.
- The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher and that the Designated Teacher is able to carry out his or her responsibilities as below. Ensure that the Designated Teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC are recognised and met.

### **The Governing Body should receive an annual report setting out:**

1. The number of LAC and PLAC students on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

### **The role of the Designated Teacher and the Safeguarding Officer**

Government guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "*someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for LAC and PLAC assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations of them.*"

- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people.
- Work with the Warrington Virtual School Headteacher (and other relevant LA VSH) to best support each child. In Warrington Simon Lennox is the Virtual School Headteacher.
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met.
- Provide basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Maintain an up-to-date record of the LAC in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- Review the progress of LAC as part of routine oversight of the Vulnerable Pupils Register.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child

Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LACs may face.

- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware that LAC are statistically more vulnerable to bullying. The Designated Teacher will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding LAC.

### **The Responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer**

The Safeguarding Officer at Bridgewater High School Nicola Rowland-Nash will support the Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC pupils. She has received training to the same level and will, under the direction of the Designated Teacher ensure that duties listed above are undertaken.

### **The Responsibility of all staff**

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC e.g. attachment and trauma awareness.

- Be aware that 60% of LAC say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.
- School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on any LAC and PLAC.

### **Confidentiality**

Information on LAC 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.

### **Record keeping and information sharing**

The Designated Teacher/Safeguarding Officer will keep an up-to-date record of LAC and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff. A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the child. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

### **Pupil premium Plus (PP+)**

PP+ for LAC (£2345) will be delegated to schools by the relevant virtual school. We will allocate the funding to support appropriate provision for individual LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and the child's PEP. We will work in partnership with the child's Virtual School to ensure that LAC receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve in all aspects of school life.

For PLAC, the PP+ funding will go directly to the school's budget if the child is listed as PLAC on the January census. This funding will be used to support pupils in this category.

### **Exclusions**

TCAT recognises that LAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. We will 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.

Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school and minimise the risk of exclusion.

Where required we will discuss the rationale with the Virtual School.

The child or young person's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. Relevant measures and resources will be

considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

If there is no option other than exclusion then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

### **Alternative Provision**

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for alternative provision, alternative to daily attendance at school will be-

- A plan that will retain the LAC on roll at Bridgewater.
- Full time or contribute to full time attendance.
- Meet the educational needs of the child.
- High quality and provide the opportunity to make progress in the course of study provided by the setting.
- An agreed part of the overall PEP for the student.

### **Staff development and training**

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of LAC.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision will identify and support Looked After Children with SEN in line with the school SEN policy.

### **Home-school liaison**

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential.

Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

### **Links with other agencies**

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child including those with specialist skills in the voluntary and charity sector along with social care, educational psychologists, CAMHS etc.

### **Admissions arrangements**

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.



The school recognises that LAC are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE *School Admissions Code* (2014)

## **Reference**

\* All statistics referenced from the Department for Education. A useful document to consider is the NSPCC's: *Statistics, Looked After Children* published Jan 2019  
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1622/statistics-briefing-looked-after-children.pdf>

### Statutory DfE Guidance:

*'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children'*  
February 2018

*'The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children'*  
February 2018

### Warrington Virtual School:

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