



Lakelands
Academy

**Policy in supporting the
educational outcomes for
looked-after and previously
looked-after children**

Next Review Autumn 2024

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Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked-after and previously LAC are of real concern. Students who are looked-after and previously looked-after require special support and additional attention in order to optimise their life chances.

Lakelands Academy endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention, for all our students. With this in mind, we aim to:

Encourage students to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.

Ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.

Plan support for looked after and previously looked after children realistically and using the academy's resources efficiently in order to ensure the academy meets their needs.

Promote a positive culture in all aspects of academy life.

Help students develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

1. Legal framework

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 2E of the Academies Act 2010.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

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:

- A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
- A special guardianship order
- An adoption order

Or, they appear to the governing board to have:

- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

Electronic Personal education plan (EPEP) is part of a Shropshire 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. Children administered by other LAs (eg Wrexham, Powys) use their LA's system but for ease of understanding, the terms PEP and EPEP will be used throughout this document.

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 and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies and documents:-

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Home School Agreement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- PSED policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Positive Mental health policy (students)

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The **Board of Governors** is responsible for:

Ensuring the academy has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.

Reviewing the academy's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.

Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC has received the appropriate training.

Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.

Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the academy.

Ensuring they receive feedback from the **headteacher** regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an **annual** basis.

2.2. **The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:**

Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.

Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.

Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC children.

Working with the academy to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.

Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.

Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-LAC as effectively as possible.

Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:

Maintaining an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in academy settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.

Informing the head teacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.

Ensuring social workers, schools/ academies, designated teachers, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities regarding a student's PEP.

Ensuring that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.

Avoiding delays in providing suitable educational provision.

Ensuring the education achievement of LAC and previously LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.

Reporting regularly on the attainment, progress and academy attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

2.3. The **head teacher** is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the **Board of Governors annually** on the following:
 - The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the academy
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other student groups
 - The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other student groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other student groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC and previous LAC is a key priority.
- Actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

2.4. **The designated teacher for LAC and previously LAC is responsible for:**

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and previously-LAC at the academy.

- Acting as the main contact for social services and the education department.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC and previously LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC and previous LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's personal education plan PEP is developed and used in academy to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENDCO to ensure all student needs are met.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.

2.5. The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC if the child has Special Educational Needs.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-LAC.

2.6. Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and previously-LAC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and previously-LAC.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously-LAC.

3. 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:

- 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
- 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
- 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

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 funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children

- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium 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 like 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 teachers 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 understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

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 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:

- Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans

- 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
- 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
- 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:

- 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
- School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
- 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:

- 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
- 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 or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

5 Training

The designated teacher and other academy staff involved in the education of LAC and previously-LAC have received appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

School admissions arrangements

SEND

Attachment, and the impact of trauma

Attendance

Exclusions

Homework

GCSE options

Managing challenging behaviour

Promoting positive educational and recreational activities

Supporting students to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment

6 Student mental health

- LAC and previously-LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the academy is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously-LAC, and know how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

7 Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

- Past experiences of LAC and previously-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the academy's **Behavioural Policy**.
- The academy will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' and, as far as possible, avoid suspending or excluding any LAC and previously LAC
- Where the academy has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort; and where either is considered, the academy will work with the VSH, and others, to consider what additional support can be provided to prevent this, and any additional arrangements that can be made to support the student's education in the event of exclusion.

- The academy will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid suspension and permanent exclusion for previously LAC children.

8 Students with SEND

- Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.
- The SENCO, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-LAC.

9 Monitoring and review

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children, Miss Aimee Warren.
- The next scheduled review date for this policy is autumn 2024.