



**Lakelands**  
Academy

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

**Next Review Autumn 2026**

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## **Statement of intent**

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Children looked-after (CLA) and previously CLA (P/CLA) are of real concern. Children looked-after and previously children 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 children looked after and previously children looked after realistically and using the academy's resources efficiently 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 children looked-after and previously children looked-after.

It also takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.

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

### **Definitions**

Children Looked-after 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 children looked-after 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 this needs to be on the line above

Electronic Personal education plan (EPEP) is part of a Shropshire child looked-after 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 Swindon and Southampton) 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 children looked-after, 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 children looked-after.

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

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour for Learning and Relationships Policy
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Home School Agreement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Public Sector Equality Duty 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 CLALA and previously-CLALA.

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

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

Ensuring CLACLA and previously-CLACLA 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 CLA 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 CLALA, 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 CLA and previously-CLA children.

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

Acting as the educational advocate for CLA

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

Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:

Maintaining an up-to-date roll of the CLA 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 CLA.

Avoiding delays in providing suitable educational provision.

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

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

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

- Appointing the designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA.
- 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 CLA and previously-CLA in the academy
  - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other student groups
  - The attendance of CLA and previously-CLA, compared to other student groups
  - The level of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions, compared to other student groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA and previous CLA is a key priority.
- Actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA

**2.4. The designated teacher for CLA and previously CLA 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 CLA and previously-CLA.
- Promoting the educational achievement of CLA and previously-CLA at the academy.

- Acting as the main contact for social services and the education department.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring CLA are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for CLA and previously CLA.
- Ensuring that CLA and previous CLA 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 CLA and previously-CLA.

**2.5. The SENDCO is responsible for:**

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CLA 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-CLA.

**2.6. Staff are responsible for:**

- Being aware of CLA and previously-CLA 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 CLA and previously-CLA.
- Promoting the self-esteem of CLA and previously-CLA.

### 3. Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:-

- Make sure children looked after 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 child looked after 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 children looked after and previously children looked-after**

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of children looked-after and previously children looked-after are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for children looked-after can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously children looked-after 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 children looked-after



- 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 children looked-after and previously children looked-after in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of children looked-after and previously children looked-after, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to children looked-after, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a child looked-after may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in children looked-after and previously children looked-after, 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 children looked-after and previously children looked-after 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 children looked-after and previously children looked-after
- 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 children looked-after 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 children looked-after, 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 child looked-after 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 children looked-after, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians

Make sure that for each child looked-after:

- 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 child looked-after is at risk of suspension :

- 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 suspension 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 child looked-after is at risk of suspension, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding suspension

## 5 Training

The designated teacher and other academy staff involved in the education of CLA and previously-CLA 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

- CLA and previously-CLA 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 CLA and previously-CLA, and know how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

## 7 Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

- Past experiences of CLA and previously-CLA will be considered when designing and implementing the academy's **Behavioural for Learning and Relationships 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 CLA and previously CLA
- 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 CLA children.

## **8 Students with SEND**

- Support for CLA 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-CLA.

## **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.