



Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Person Responsible:	Mrs H Mukherjee	Frequency of Review:	1 Year
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1 Definition

For the purposes of this policy a child ‘looked after by a local authority’ is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales.

A child is in ‘state care’ outside of England and Wales if s/he is in care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Upper Wharfedale School recognises that ‘Looked After Children’ and ‘Previously Looked After Children’ may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

2 School Commitment

Nationally, ‘Looked After Children’ (LAC) and ‘Previously Looked After Children’ (PLAC) 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. 75% of LAC and PLAC leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping LAC and PLAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Upper Wharfedale School recognises that LAC and PLAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC and PLAC 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.

Upper Wharfedale School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of LAC and PLAC in the following ways:

- 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.
- 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 Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.
- All LAC and PLAC 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.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher

- Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC and PLAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC and PLAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

3.2 Governing Body

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC
- 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 enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC and PLAC are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 - The number of LAC and PLAC students on the school’s roll (if any).
 - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

3.3 Designated Teacher

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 for them.*” It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- 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.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC 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 and PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy 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.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC and PLAC say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.

3.4 Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all students.
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC and PLAC say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.