

# Looked After Children (LAC) Policy



For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

Written by:	R Bottell
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Chairs Signature:	See Paper Copy

## **Mission Statement of Nutgrove Methodist Primary School**

Nutgrove Methodist Primary School strives to provide a caring environment in which every individual can achieve his or her full potential, without limits.

This is encompassed by our Bible verse For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11.

To achieve this, we wish to create a happy, secure and purposeful culture throughout the school, which is conducive to learning and high standards, and is based on our Christian values, love, hope and respect.

Our school's motto and vision is 'My Best, Always, Everywhere' which is interwoven within our curriculum intent and design.

## **Safeguarding Statement**

At Nutgrove Methodist Primary School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

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## Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for LAC and previously LAC are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Barriers to their progress include a high levels of disruption and change in home and school placements, lack of motivation or involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Nutgrove Methodist Primary School 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.

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

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Prioritise education set within an inclusive context which makes reasonable adjustments to ensure a personalised curriculum
- Plan support, including accessing resources from other agencies as well as provision from school resources to ensure the school meets their needs
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Promote attendance, through a programme of early intervention, priority action, reducing exclusions and promoting stability within a positive learning environment
- Identify need, including social and emotional as well as learning needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

## **2. Definitions**

2.1. "Looked after children (LAC)" are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.

- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

2.2. “Previously-LAC” (PLAC) are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

3.1. The Local Advisory Board are responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC (PLAC).
- Reviewing the school’s policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child.
- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and previously-LAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and previously-LAC.
- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.

3.2. The Virtual Headteacher (VH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- 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.
- Working with the school 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:
- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the school headteachers and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
- Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

### 3.3. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Ensuring the designated teachers for LAC and previously-LAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring all staff receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Children Looked After, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs.
- 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 School's Local Advisory Board annually on the following:
- The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the school
- An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
- The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
- The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups

- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring Pupil Premium+ for previously-LAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

3.4. The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC is responsible for:

- Ensuring that Children Looked After are welcomed into the school, necessary meetings are held and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs are identified and met.
- 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.
- Monitoring and tracking progress of Children Looked After in school and intervening if there is evidence of individual underachievement
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff so they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage LAC may face
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and previously-LAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored. Ensuring PEP review meetings are held regularly and information passed to all those concerned, including the local authority
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the Local Advisory Board, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Children Looked After in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- Establishing and maintaining regular contact with home (in line with guidance from social care and the local authority), statutory and voluntary agencies



- Attending training as required and to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Children Looked After through attendance at the CLA Network Meetings.

3.5. The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns around LAC and previously-LAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

3.6. The SENCO is responsible for:

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

3.7. Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and previously-LAC 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.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and previously-LAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously-LAC.

## **4. Personal education plan (PEP)**

- 4.1. All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated within 20 school days by the social worker of the Looked after Child 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 Looked after Child.
- 4.2. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure 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.

- 4.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- 4.4. The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- 4.5. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- 4.6. It is vital that the Children Looked After are 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.
- 4.7. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:
- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
  - On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
  - Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
  - Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
  - School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
  - Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
  - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
  - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
  - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.
- 4.8. The VH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or previously-LAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of Pupil premium+ funding to improve their attainment.
- 4.9. Any interventions supported by pupil premium+ will be evidence-based and in the best interest of the pupil.

## **5. Working with agencies and the VSH**

- 5.1. Nutgrove Methodist Primary School will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- 5.2. The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review.

- 5.3. The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and previously-LAC.
- 5.4. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- 5.5. The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- 5.6. Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
- 5.7. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how pupil premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- 5.8. PP+ for previously-LAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school.
- 5.9. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or previously-LAC, and according to their needs.
- 5.10. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.
- 5.11. The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.
- 5.12. The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and previously-LAC.

## **6. Training**

- 6.1. The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and previously-LAC have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:
  - School admissions arrangements
  - SEND
  - Attendance
  - Exclusions
  - Homework
  - Managing and challenging behaviour
  - Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
  - Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment

- Safeguarding

## **7. Safeguarding**

- 7.1. The school recognises that many LAC or PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.
- 7.2. All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.
- 7.3. Where a LAC or PLAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.
- 7.4. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and previously-LAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.
- 7.5. Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 7.6. Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a LAC or PLAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

## **8. Pupil mental health**

- 8.1. LAC and PLAC 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.
- 8.2. The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- 8.3. The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and PLAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular

contact with LAC or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

## **9. Exclusions**

- 9.1. Nutgrove Methodist Primary School recognises that Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a Looked after Child is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.
- 9.2. The child's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.
- 9.3. The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.
- 9.4. Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VH will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- 9.5. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.
- 9.6. Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.
- 9.7. The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.
- 9.8. Permanent exclusion will only occur when there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education and welfare of others. If a LAC is at risk of permanent exclusion the CEO of the Trust will be informed in the first instance.

## **10. Pupils with SEND**

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- 10.3. If appropriate, the VH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.

- 10.4. The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that LAC and previously-LAC with SEND are supported in line with the school's SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

## **11. Information sharing**

- 11.1. Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and PLAC are understood and met.

- 11.2. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on LAC and PLAC and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

## **12. Monitoring and review**

- 12.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher.

- 12.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2025