South Avenue Primary School

Designated Teacher and Education of Children in Care Policy

Version (Date): June 2026

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Member of Staff Responsible: Ms T Cadwallader

1. Aims

Many LAC (Looked After Children) will have experienced disrupted schooling and gaps in learning. In addition, a significant proportion of LAC have some form of Special Educational Need and or have been excluded from school. This has resulted in the attainment of this group not being in line with the attainment of their peers nationally.

At South Avenue Primary School, we will address this by:

• providing a safe environment for all LAC, where their educational experience is valued, high aspirations are encouraged and belief in the potential of all children is held.

• Ensuring that all LAC are provided with, and have access to, support to enable them to have every opportunity to enjoy, learn and achieve in line with their peers.

• Ensuring that our policies and procedures for LAC meet the requirements outlined within 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children, Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, DfE February 2018.'

2. Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC) or Children in Care (CiC) refers to a child 'looked-after by a local authority' as outlined by section 22 Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

All LAC from pre-school to age 18 should have a PEP in place, and the duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC extends to those young people aged 16 and 17 who are preparing to leave care.

LAC/CIC are children who are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours and include children who are:

• living with foster parents

• living in a residential children's home or

• living in residential settings like schools or secure units

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) refers to children who are

'…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 persons, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales,'

3. Responsibilities

The Governors

The Governors have appointed _____as the named Safeguarding Governor responsible for championing the needs of LAC & PLAC at every level throughout South Avenue Primary School.

The named named Governor will ensure that:

• The needs of LAC & PLAC are considered, reflected and supported within all relevant school policies.

• Governors and Senior Leadership are aware of the legal responsibilities and guidance in regards LAC & PLAC in education.

• Our admissions practises continue to give LAC & PLAC the highest priority admission to the school, as outlined within 'School Admissions' DfE guidance 2014.

• The annual LAC & PLAC monitoring report is scrutinised to ensure that the academic progress of LAC & PLAC pupils is effectively being tracked and challenged.

• Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) spending is scrutinised ensuring that is used appropriately and effectively.

• Resources are available to address the needs specific to LAC & PLAC, and that disparity in academic progress in comparison to their peers within school, including patterns in attendance and exclusion and provision for gifted and talented pupils are highlighted and addressed appropriately.

• An appropriate member of staff is appointed as Designated Teacher, who has access to training and resources (including time) to undertake their responsibilities, and has the seniority to influence the South Avenue Primary School Senior Leadership, to meet and champion the needs of LAC & PLAC throughout the school.

• All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC/PLAC.

The Head of School

Is responsible for ensuring that:

• The role of the Designated Teacher (DT) is filled by an appropriate member of staff at all times (including arrangements to allow for staff absences and resignation). The DT should have the seniority to work with Senior Leadership, Governors and all staff to provide information, advice and champion the achievement and needs of LAC & PLAC pupils.

• The DT is provided with the time to fulfil their role and any relevant training to assist with the fulfilment of their duties.

• Policies and procedures to monitor and address the needs of, and support for LAC & PLAC pupils are in place and adhered to, with reference to academic progress, admissions, attendance, safeguarding and exclusions, and that swift action is taken when concerns arise.

• South Avenue Primary School reports on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children to Governors, the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Local Authority as required.

• South Avenue Primary School works proactively with the Local Authority to provide support and address the needs of LAC & PLAC

• All school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities in regard to LAC & PLAC as detailed within this policy and related guidance.

• LAC Pupil Premium is used 'to the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP)'

• All staff are aware of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups and their propensity towards being both the victims and perpetrator of Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation,Missing episodes, County Lines, Online abuse and Child-on-child abuse.

• The Local Authority (Social Workers and the Virtual School) are informed of the exclusion from school of any LAC.

• An Anti-bullying Policy is in place and stringently followed which recognises that a significant proportion of LAC have experienced bullying at some point.

• The exclusion of LAC & PLAC is avoided, alternatives to exclusion are considered and additional support is put in place to support those pupils at risk of exclusion

• LAC & PLAC are encouraged and supported to continue engaging and achieving post 16.

• Information in regard to LAC & PLAC is treated confidentially, but also provided swiftly to relevant agencies and new schools.

The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher is responsible for and committed to championing the needs and attainment of LAC & PLAC pupils (up to the age of 18), in an effort to bridge the gap and raise their attainment so that it is in-line with their peers.

The DT is a qualified teacher and "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen…[who] should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them."

The designated teacher is responsible for:

• Coordinating support for LAC & PLAC in school and providing information, advice and training for staff and governors to raise awareness of their needs. For example, raising awareness of possible Mental Health needs and the impact of poor attachment and trauma on behaviour and learning.

• Being the first point of contact for the Local Authority, LAC & PLAC, their carers and associated professionals, ensuring that a member of staff represents the school at all relevant meetings.

• Once the PEP is initiated by the child's social worker, the Designated Teacher will begin the process of working collaboratively to develop, implement and review the plan.

• Ensuring that all staff are trained on Trauma & Attachment.

• Liaising with the Virtual School, Social Workers, Carers and other relevant professionals when LAC & PLAC are experiencing difficulties and or at risk of exclusion, arranging meetings to share concerns and plan interventions.

• Ensuring that all LAC & PLAC (and their carers) have an identified member of staff that they can approach in school.

• Monitoring the progress of LAC & PLAC throughout the school year culminating in an annual progress report to Governors.

• Coordinating and planning smooth LAC & PLAC educational transitions, including starting school, changing Key Stage etc keeping in mind their needs, in conjunction with the carers, parents, Virtual School and other professionals.

• Swiftly identifying possible learning needs, safeguarding and mental health concerns to the Safeguarding Lead, Wellbeing Lead and SENCO where appropriate and jointly planning interventions to address these concerns.

• Encouraging LAC & PLAC pupils to take part in extracurricular activities and trips, and removing any hidden barriers to their involvement.

• Ensuring instances of bullying affecting LAC & PLAC pupils is acted upon swiftly and that appropriate support is put in place.

• Maintaining the confidentiality of LAC & PLAC, sharing personal information on a need to know basis only.

• Using the PLAC PP+ appropriately and creatively to address the needs of PLAC pupils in school.

• PEPs (Personal Education Plans)

° Ensuring that PEPs for LAC are accurate, effective, relevant and reviewed at least termly, in line with statutory guidance, with the child, social worker, carers and any other relevant professionals. PEPs will include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets and explain how progress towards them will be measured against the child's developmental and educational needs.

° PEPs for LAC children with EHCP's complement rather than mirror the EHCP.

° Advising relevant staff of PEP targets, making sure that staff work with pupils to meet their targets.

° Ensuring that that the Pupil Premium for LAC is used appropriately to support the child in meeting targets outlined within the PEP.

• Offer regular information regarding the educational outcomes, attendance, suspensions and safeguarding issues affecting Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children to governors.

All staff

• Have high expectations in regard to the achievement of LAC & PLAC pupils.

• Ensure that the individual needs of LAC & PLAC are met through quality, differentiated teaching.

• Are aware that LAC and PLAC have high rates of SEN and flag concerns regarding learning with the SENCO and DT. Are aware of the specific needs of LAC & PLAC in relation to Attachment and Trauma and make appropriate adjustment to teaching and classroom management to meet these needs.

• Are aware of the prevalence of LAC & PLAC mental health needs, and flag concerns to

the DT and Wellbeing Lead.

• Work proactively with the DT to ensure that LAC & PLAC meet their targets and achieve, highlighting any barriers to learning, and inclusion at the earliest opportunity.

• Work to ensure the Inclusion of LAC & PLAC within the School community, maintaining their confidentiality while also providing support with raising their selfesteem, and supporting their relationships with peers in line with the Anti Bullying Policy.

5. PLAC

The experiences and outcomes of PLAC can be very similar to those of LAC. PLAC educational needs are unlikely to have changed just because their care status has. To address this, the needs of LAC and PLAC are prioritised and addressed in a similar way. The progress of PLAC pupils is reviewed termly and we work proactively with parents, carers and other professionals to address any areas of concern and put in place support as appropriate

Parents and Carers of PLAC are encouraged to identify their child's previously looked after status on entry to the school and are required to produce documentation to support this. Any information will be treated confidentially.

Concerns regarding the progress of PLAC pupils are highlighted to parents and carers

6. Admissions

South Avenue Primary School acknowledges and ensures that LAC & PLAC pupils are given the highest priority for school admissions as outlined in the DfE School Admissions Code 2021, regardless of where they live.

We work collaboratively with the Virtual School regarding any concerns that we might have in relation to the admission of LAC & PLAC pupils. The Designated Teacher attends LAC & PLAC admissions meetings and works closely alongside the Virtual School, Social Worker, Carers and any other professionals to ensure that pupils feel supported and have a successful smooth transition into school life.

7. Inclusion

LAC & PLAC pupils are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life. Through effective communication with carers, professionals and staff, as well as the appropriate use of pupil premium and the PPG, we work to remove the barriers to LAC & PLAC pupils having a robust, enjoyable and valuable school experience.

The experiences of LAC & PLAC has resulted in disproportionate levels of Special Educational Needs within these groups. Nationally 70% of LAC have some form of SEN. In acknowledgement of this, individual attainment is monitored closely by the Designated Teacher via the PEP process and any concerns are identified and highlighted to the SENCO and Virtual School. Concerns raised by Carers, Social Workers and the Virtual School are welcomed and swiftly acted upon. Where it is felt that further assessment may be needed, LAC & PLAC access to the SEN assessment process and interventions are prioritised.

A significant proportion of LAC (and therefore PLAC) have undiagnosed Speech and Language needs which impacts on educational outcomes. In recognition of this, all LAC & PLAC (with the consent of parents & carers) are screened on entry for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. The outcome of LAC screening is communicated to the Virtual School and areas of concern are addressed swiftly with in-school support. Significant or continuing concerns are referred to specialist support from Speech and Language services.

Local Authority policy, pupil premium for each LAC is used to support:

- Academic achievement and progress.
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented.
- Attendance.
- Inclusion [by reducing internal and external exclusion].
- Social skills.
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider

In instances where further funding is needed for support, advice from the Virtual School will be sought.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

A Pupil Premium Grant of £500 per term is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that pupils meet the targets outlined within their PEP. While the PP+ for PLAC is not a 'personal budget,' should a PLAC require support over and above that which is provided for any other pupil, the PP+ will be used to fund this.

8. Attendance

We recognise that good attendance is crucial for LAC and PLAC pupils to achieve their potential, but also understand that these pupils may face additional barriers to attendance and may have legitimate reasons for absence that other pupils do not.

Monitoring and Reporting

• The attendance of LAC and PLAC is carefully monitored daily and reported to Welfare Call
• Attendance data for LAC and PLAC pupils is analysed separately to identify patterns or concerns

• The Designated Teacher reviews attendance data for LAC and PLAC pupils at least half-termly

• Attendance is a standing item at all PEP meetings • Attendance data for LAC and PLAC pupils is included in the annual report to governors

Responding to Absence

• Carers and parents of LAC and PLAC will be contacted on the first day of any unauthorised absence

• We will work sensitively to understand the reasons for absence, recognising that LAC and PLAC may have complex reasons for not attending (e.g., anxiety, placement instability, contact arrangements)

• Concerns regarding attendance, including identified patterns of absence, will be raised promptly with carers, parents, social workers and the Virtual School Head

• We will work collaboratively with the Virtual School Head to develop strategies to improve attendance where concerns arise

Flexibility and Understanding

We recognise that LAC may have additional appointments and commitments that other pupils do not, including:

• Contact visits with birth family members

• Medical, dental or optical appointments

• Therapy or CAMHS appointments

• Court appearances or meetings with solicitors

• Social worker visits

• Reviews and PEP meetings

Where possible, we will:

• Work with carers and social workers to schedule appointments outside of school hours

• Be flexible when this is not possible, authorising absence for these important appointments
• Provide work for the child to complete if they miss significant learning time

• Help the child catch up on any missed learning

• Not penalise LAC for absence related to their care status

Promoting Good Attendance

We will actively promote good attendance for LAC and PLAC by:

• Communicating high expectations about attendance to pupils, carers and social workers

• Celebrating good and improved attendance

• Removing barriers to attendance (e.g., providing uniform, equipment, or support with transport where needed, using PP+ funding)

• Ensuring the school is a welcoming, safe place where LAC and PLAC want to be

• Addressing any issues that may be affecting attendance (e.g., bullying, anxiety, friendship difficulties) quickly and sensitively

• Providing a nurturing, trauma-informed environment that helps pupils feel secure

Multi-Agency Working

We will work closely with parents, carers, the Local Authority, the Virtual School Head and other agencies to communicate expectations about attendance and improve it. This includes:

• Attending multi-agency meetings where attendance is a concern

• Contributing to plans to improve attendance

• Implementing strategies recommended by professionals

• Sharing information appropriately to support the child

9. Transitions

We recognise that transitions can be particularly challenging for LAC and PLAC due to their experiences of change and loss. We are committed to ensuring all transitions are carefully planned and sensitively managed to support continuity of education and emotional wellbeing.

Starting School (Including Mid-Year Admissions)

When a LAC or PLAC pupil joins South Avenue Primary School, we will:

• Meet with the child, carers, social worker and Virtual School Head before admission to gather relevant information about the child's needs, strengths and any concerns

• Review previous school records, PEPs and any other relevant documentation to understand the child's educational history

• Arrange additional pre-admission visits if needed to help the child familiarise themselves with the school environment

• Assign a key adult (usually the class teacher or a member of the pastoral team) for the child to build a trusting relationship with

• Respond flexibly to emergency admissions, prioritising the child's immediate emotional needs while gathering necessary information

Transitions Within School

To support LAC and PLAC pupils moving between year groups and key stages within our school, we will:

• Plan transitions earlier than for other pupils, beginning preparation in the summer term • Arrange additional visits to the new classroom and opportunities to meet the new teacher • Ensure new teachers are briefed on the child's needs, strengths and effective strategies (on a need-to-know basis) before the transition

• Maintain consistency where possible, such as keeping the same key adult or Teaching Assistant

• Update PEPs to reflect transition plans and any additional support needed

• Involve the child in transition planning, listening to their views and concerns

• Provide transition booklets or social stories to help prepare the child

• Monitor the child closely during the first half-term after transition and adjust support as needed

Moving to Secondary School

We recognise that the transition to secondary school can be particularly anxiety-provoking for LAC and PLAC. We will:

• Begin transition planning in Year 5 to allow sufficient time for preparation • Hold early meetings with the child, carers, social worker, Virtual School Head and the receiving secondary school

• Arrange additional transition visits beyond the standard programme, including opportunities to visit when the school is quieter

• Ensure the designated teacher at the receiving school receives comprehensive information, including the most recent PEP and details of effective support strategies

• Facilitate 'handover' meetings between our staff and secondary school staff • Create a transition plan as part of the Year 6 PEP, identifying potential challenges and strategies to address them

• Where possible, arrange for the child to meet their form tutor and key staff before starting

• Maintain contact with the secondary school during the autumn term to ensure a smooth settling-in period and offer support if needed

• Ensure PP+ funding follows the child and that any unspent funds are transferred appropriately

Emergency Placement Changes

We understand that some LAC may experience emergency placement changes that affect their school placement. In these circumstances, we will:

• Work closely with the Virtual School Head and social worker to determine whether remaining at South Avenue Primary School is in the child's best interests

• If the child needs to move schools, ensure all relevant information (including PEPs, assessment data and details of effective strategies) is transferred immediately to the new school

• Provide a sensitive and supportive departure, allowing the child to say goodbye to key staff and friends where appropriate

• If the child remains at our school despite a placement change, provide additional pastoral support during this unsettling time

• Arrange transport support in collaboration with the Local Authority if needed

• Maintain flexibility and prioritise the child's emotional wellbeing over academic concerns during the immediate aftermath of a placement change

10. Working with the Virtual School

The Virtual School plays a crucial role in promoting the educational achievement of LAC. We are committed to working in close partnership with the Virtual School to ensure the best outcomes for our LAC and PLAC pupils.

Regular Communication

We will maintain regular communication with the Virtual School, including:

• Notifying the Virtual School immediately when a LAC pupil joins or leaves our school

• Inviting the Virtual School Head (or their representative) to all PEP meetings

• Contacting the Virtual School promptly when concerns arise about a LAC pupil's progress, attendance, behaviour or wellbeing

• Providing termly updates on the progress of LAC pupils

• Responding promptly to requests for information from the Virtual School

Seeking Advice and Support

We will proactively seek advice from the Virtual School on:

• Admissions of LAC pupils, particularly where there are complexities or concerns

• Strategies to support individual LAC pupils who are struggling academically, socially or emotionally

• Effective use of PP+ funding

• Alternatives to exclusion when a LAC pupil is at risk

• Transition planning, particularly to secondary school

• Any other issues affecting the education of LAC pupils

Joint Planning

We will work collaboratively with the Virtual School to:

• Develop and review high-quality PEPs that set ambitious targets and identify effective support

• Plan interventions for LAC pupils who are not making expected progress

• Coordinate multi-agency support where needed

• Ensure smooth transitions for LAC pupils • Monitor the impact of PP+ spending

Accessing Resources and Training

We will take advantage of resources and training offered by the Virtual School, including:

• Training for the Designated Teacher and other staff

• Network meetings for designated teachers

• Resources and guidance on supporting LAC pupils

• Access to specialist services or interventions • Information about local and national initiatives

11. Exclusions

LAC and PLAC have disproportionally high levels of exclusions from schools nationally, placing them at a further educational disadvantage. In line with Local Authority and DfE Guidance, South Avenue Primary School is committed to avoiding the exclusion of LAC and PLAC wherever possible. We will exhaust all alternatives and seek advice from the Virtual School before considering any exclusion.

Advice and support from the Local Authority (Social workers, the Virtual School or the Attendance Officer) will be sought where it is felt that a LAC or PLAC may become at risk of exclusion. Support and alternatives to exclusion will be considered.

Alternatives to exclusion may include:

• SLT Supervisions

• Restorative Justice

• Managed Moves (through the Headteacher of the Virtual School)

• CAMHS support

• Internal Suspensions

Where a fixed term exclusion of a LAC is unavoidable, parents/carers and the Virtual School will be contacted prior to the pupil leaving the school site and work will be provided to avoid further gaps in education. Plans and support will be put in place to avoid further exclusion on the child's return to school.

This Policy should be read alongside:

- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying Attendance
- Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Premium Statement & Strategy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (DfE)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance