



Looked After Children Child in Care Policy

Policy Code:	SG3
Policy Start Date:	December 2023
Policy Review Date:	December 2025

1. **Background and definition**

For the purposes of this policy, the acronyms LAC and CiC will be used to replace Looked after Child and Child in Care.

These are both terms used to describe children who are in the care of the Local Authority.

For some organisations the term CiC has replaced the term LAC in response to the wishes of young people. However, some sources still use the term LAC as a synonym for CiC.

In this policy we will use both.

Definition of Looked After Children under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by the Local Authority if he, or she, is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than twenty-four hours by the Local Authority.

They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents' permission. This is called a Section 20.
- Children who are the subjects of a legal care order or interim care order (this is granted whilst court proceedings are finalised).
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection.
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the Local Authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a legal care order by the courts under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989. They may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the Local Authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. They may live in foster care, in a Children's Home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be "Looked After Children".

Previously Looked After Children

A previously Looked After Child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because he/she is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order.

The Designated Teacher and LAC Co-ordinator will satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support by asking for evidence of previously Looked After status, using the Local Authority or Virtual School Head as needed.

Nationally, Looked After Children/Children in Care significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring they are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Helping LAC/CiC pupils succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Community Inclusive Trust (CIT). This policy takes account of:

Community Inclusive Trust – **Looked After Children (LAC) Policy**

- CIT's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of LAC/CiC pupils.
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (*Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors*).

CIT's approach to supporting the educational achievement of LAC/CiC pupils is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Early intervention and priority action.
- Listening to children.
- Promoting health and wellbeing.
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability.
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

2. Implications

As for all our pupils, the Trust is committed to helping every Looked After Child to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

The Trust Board is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure a Designated Teacher for LAC/CiC pupils is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for every LAC/CiC pupil.
- Identify a Governor as Designated Governor for LAC/CiC pupils.

This policy links with a number of other school and Trust policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of LAC/CiC pupils when reviewing them:

- Over-subscription and admissions criteria.
- Code of Conduct – Staff.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Home School Agreement.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

The school and Trust will champion the needs of LAC/CiC pupils, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes to ensure they achieve their individual potential.

3. Responsibility of the CEO (delegated to Headteachers)

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC/CiC pupils, 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 procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of LAC/CiC pupils and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC/CiC pupils. Ofsted now select a number of LAC/CiC pupils, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

4. Responsibility of the Trust Board (delegated to ELT)

- Ensure that the LSB is aware of the need to appoint a Governor with responsibility for LAC/CiC pupils. This will usually be the Governor who is responsible for safeguarding.
- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC/CiC pupils.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC/CiC pupils.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC/CiC pupils.
- The DfE guidance is clear that the Pupil Premium + Grant (PPG) for LAC and previously LAC must be used by schools for the benefit of the child's educational needs and/or social inclusion/personal interest and future career pathway as outlined in their PEP. The impact of the PPG must be measurable and evidenced.
- Ensure the school and Trust's other policies and procedures support LAC pupil needs.

5. Procedures: The Local School Board will:

- Appoint a Governor with responsibility for LAC/CiC pupils – this will usually be the Governor who is responsible for Safeguarding.
- Monitor the academic progress of all LAC/CiC pupils through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure LAC/CiC pupils are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's over-subscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure LAC/CiC pupils achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- Ensure the school has a Designated Teacher and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of LAC/CiC pupils are recognised and met.
- Receive a report (Appendix A) once a year setting out:
 - The number of LAC/CiC pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 - Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their SAT scores, GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete 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.

6. The Role of the Designated Teacher

Government guidance says the Designated Teacher should be “*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.*”

Governors should be aware all schools are already required to have a Designated Teacher for LAC/CiC. It is strongly recommended this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through our Looked After Children Education Adviser Team. Governors should be aware that OFSTED will focus on Looked After Children, monitoring how the academy has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them. Our Designated Teachers will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan for that transition in consultation with the child’s social worker.
- Ensure a PEP 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 each LAC/CiC pupil has an identified member of staff they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child’s own wishes. Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school’s pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC/CiC pupil that is necessary within the school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Encourage LAC/CiC pupils 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/CiC pupils.
- 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 60% of LAC/CiC pupils say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Ensure the audit on attendance and numbers is returned to the LAC Education Adviser every term.
- Raise awareness in secondary schools that LAC/CiC pupils are automatically entitled to an allowance if they go into the sixth form.

- Work in partnership with the Virtual School and promote associated initiatives such as the Caring 2 Learn Project.
- Support staff teams to access related training, e.g. trauma informed practice.

7. The Responsibilities of All Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC/CiC pupils as for all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable all LAC/CiC pupils to achieve stability and success within the school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC/CiC pupils.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC/CiC pupils.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC/CiC pupils say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the school's policy.

8. Working with the Virtual School

The role of the Virtual School is to work in partnership with the child or young person's educational setting to ensure that they are supported to fulfil their potential at all stages of their education and to act as a champion to promote their progress and educational attainment – thus, supporting children and young people who are (or who have been) in care.

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires Local Authorities in England to have a Virtual School Head (VSH) who monitors looked after children, previously looked after children and those children with a social worker as if they were in one school, the Virtual School. In June 2021, the role of the VSH was extended to include non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker, as well as looked after children. This role includes identifying the Local Authority's looked after children and those with a social worker, and being the lead responsible officer for ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve their educational experiences and outcomes.

CIT school leaders will be expected to work closely with their Local Authority VSH in the best interests of the LAC/CiC pupils in their schools. This includes seeking support for advice and guidance for managing Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus funding. In maintained schools and academies, the Designated Teacher should work with the VSH to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of the child and meet the needs of the child's personal education plan.

- 9.** This policy will be reviewed every two years, or when deemed necessary by the Trust.

APPENDIX A

[NAME OF SCHOOL]

Looked Children Report

[Academic Year]

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL INFORMATION MUST MAINTAIN THE ANONYMITY AND RESPECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE PUPILS CONCERNED

Date:	
Number of Looked After Children on role:	
Absence of all children (%)	
Absence of Looked After Children (%)	
Number of days - Fixed Term Exclusions All Pupils	
Number of days - Fixed Term Exclusions All Looked After Children	
Number of Pupils who have left school in previous academic year and their destination (Grammar School, Comprehensive School, PRU, etc.)	
Assessment Information (Statutory Results as compared with all pupils):	
Assessment Information (Internal Tracking as compared with all pupils):	
Report writer (name)	