



LAC/CiC Policy

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1. Section 1 – Statement of Intent

1.1 Purpose

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.

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

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).

All CIT schools will endeavour 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.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

1.2 Scope

All Trust staff including those responsible for governance must familiarise themselves with this policy. Staff will be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and children safe and manage risks effectively.

2. Legal framework

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

- Children Act 1989

- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Academies Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children 2023'
- 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).

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

- Over-subscription and admissions criteria.
- CIT Code of Conduct – Staff.
- Individual school Behaviour Policy.
- Any schools with a Home School Agreement in place.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.

- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Attendance Policy
- School Equality Objectives

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.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

CIT 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.

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.

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:

- Appoint a designated staff member (DT) to support the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children. This duty is covered by the trust's funding agreement and the Academies Act 2010, section 2e.
- Ensure the DT in schools are named, trained and supported to carry out the role.
- 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.

3.1 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.
 - Allowing the DT the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
 - Overseeing the school policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board **annually** on the following:
 - The number of LAC and PLAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups

- The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions of LAC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for LAC and PLAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.
- Understanding the role of the VSH and working with them to promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC.

3.2 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.

3.3 Responsibility of the Local School Board (LSB) is to:

- 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

- 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 Headteacher has named 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). o 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.

3.4 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.”

It is strongly recommended this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team; however this might not be possible in all settings.

The DT for LAC and PLAC is responsible for:

- Working with the VSH and social worker to:
 - Promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC.
 - Develop and implement their PEP.
 - Discuss how funding can be used to support the pupil's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.

- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies affecting LAC and PLAC to ensure the policies meet the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- 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 PLAC.
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand what can affect how LAC and PLAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies when working with LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring that LAC and PLAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- 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 PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Playing a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an **annual** report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC.

3.5 The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC and PLAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Highlighting the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns regarding LAC and PLAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.

- Keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor, where a child becomes a care leaver, and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.
- 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.
- Raise awareness in secondary schools that LAC/CiC pupils are automatically entitled to an allowance if they go into the sixth form.
- Support staff teams to access related training, e.g. trauma informed practice.

3.6 The SENCO is responsible for:

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

3.7 Staff are responsible for:

- Having high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC/CiC pupils as for all pupils
- Responding promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Working to enable all LAC/CiC pupils to achieve stability and success within the school. • Promote the self-esteem of all LAC/CiC pupils.
- Having an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC/CiC pupils.
- Remaining aware that 60% of LAC/CiC pupils say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the school's policy
- Being aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Developing an understanding of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the LA looking after the pupil.
- Understanding the importance of involving the pupil's parents, guardians or carers in decisions affecting their child's education.
- Being a contact for parents, guardians or carers who want advice or have concerns about their pupil's progress at school.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC/CiC and PLAC.

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

4. Working with the Virtual School and other agencies

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, 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 as 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.

The VSH is responsible for:

- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of LAC/CiC and PLAC placed within and outside the authority.
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational attainment and progress of LAC as if those children attended a single school.
- Ensuring that there are effective systems in place to:
- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC/CiC and PLAC who are attending the school.
- Gather information about the education placement, attendance and educational progress of LAC/CiC and PLAC.
- Ensure social workers, the DT, the school, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the pupil's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP.

- Ensure all LAC/CiC and PLAC at the school have up-to-date, effective and high-quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes.
- Avoid drift or delay in providing suitable educational provision, including special educational provision, and unplanned termination of educational arrangements through proactive, multi-agency co-operation.
- Ensure the educational achievement of LAC/CiC 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/CiC through the LA's corporate parenting structures.
- In respect of PLAC's the VSH will:
- respond to parental requests for advice and information
- respond to requests for advice and information from the DT, and build a good working relationship with the DT
- make general advice and information available to the school to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of PLAC, including promoting good practice on identifying and meeting their needs, and guidance on effective use of the PP+

All CIT schools through the Trust are expected to be aware that strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is vital to identifying and responding to the needs of LAC/CiC and PLAC.

All CIT schools will work proactively and collaboratively with other professionals in other agencies and organisations in line with the framework of expectations outlined in the government's Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance document by:

- Collaborating with services to achieve shared goals and share information.
- Learning from evidence and sharing perspective to evaluate provision.
- Prioritising and sharing resources depending on pupils' needs.
- Celebrating inclusivity and diversity and challenging discrimination.
- Mutually and constructively challenging others' assumptions in a respectful manner.

Information Sharing

The school recognises the importance of proactive information sharing between professionals and local agencies in order to effectively meet pupils' needs.

Staff will be made aware that whilst the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place a duty on schools to process personal information fairly and lawfully, they also allow for information to be stored and shared for safeguarding purposes, as data protection regulations do not act as a barrier to sharing information where failure to do so would result in the pupil being placed at risk of harm.

If staff members are in doubt about sharing information and data protection legislation, they will be encouraged to speak to the DSL.

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data will be put in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC/CiC and PLAC are understood and met. The arrangements set out will include:

- Who has access to information on LAC/CiC 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.

School staff will be proactive in sharing information in accordance with data protection principles as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils. This will include sharing information about any adults with whom a pupil has contact, which may impact the pupil's safety or welfare, where necessary.

The school will aim to be as transparent as possible by telling families what information they are sharing and with whom, provided that it is safe to do so.

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers of LAC/CiC and PLAC, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The DT will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC/CiC who are absent without authorisation.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC/CiC and PLAC.

The school will coordinate review meetings; for example, **hold their annual review of LAC/CiC with their statutory care review.**

5. Training

The Trust will receive assurance from the Headteacher and LSB that the DT and other school staff involved in the education of LAC/CiC and PLAC will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

The governing board will ensure that staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC and PLAC safe through training.

6. Safeguarding

The Trust is aware that LAC and PLAC most commonly become looked after because of abuse and/or neglect and because of this, they can be at potentially greater risk in relation to safeguarding.

We recognise that many LAC and 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.

The Trust expects that 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/CiC and PLAC as soon as possible.

Where a LAC/CiC or PLAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to absence from education where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC/CiC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC/CiC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a LAC/CiC or PLAC is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the school will collaborate in the multi-agency strategy discussion where appropriate to determine the pupil's welfare and plan rapid further action as necessary. The school's representative at any strategy discussion meetings will be sufficiently senior, skilled and experienced, and authorised to make decisions on the school's behalf. Information and analysis about the pupil and their family will be provided as required.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the DT if they believe a LAC/CiC or PLAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

7. Mental health

All staff in CIT schools will be made aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

LAC/CiC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. School leaders will support the DT in developing their knowledge, awareness, training and skills to support children with behaviour management and mental health.

The DT will work with the VSH to ensure school staff are able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC/CiC and PLAC, and know how to access further assessment and support, where necessary. This includes being “attachment aware” whereby school staff understand the impact of attachment disorders on a child’s emotional development and learning. A whole school approach will be adopted to identify and support pupils with attachment difficulties.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC/CiC 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/CiC or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

Leaders in schools will ensure their mental health lead works alongside the DT to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC/CiC and PLAC, and will always either be a member of, or be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO, or DSL.

8. Suspension and exclusion

Past experiences of LAC/CiC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school’s Behaviour Policy and Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

The Trust recognises that suspending or excluding LAC/CiC or PLAC can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides. When responding to incidents involving LAC/CiC and PLAC the school will show full regard to the DfE’s statutory guidance [‘Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement’](#). The headteacher will balance this recognition alongside the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all staff and pupils, devising strategies that take both into consideration.

Where the school has concerns about a LAC/CiC’s behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC/CiC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

Where the school has concerns about the behaviour of a PLAC which could result in them being excluded, the child's parents or DT may seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support the child to avoid exclusion.

As part of the termly review of a pupil's PEP, any concerns about their behaviour will be recorded, alongside information on how they are being supported to improve this and reduce the likelihood of exclusion.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy, or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others. This will be in line with the CIT Suspensions and Exclusions Policy statement.

Where a LAC/CiC is excluded, the school will document the provision of immediate suitable education in the pupil's PEP.

9. Pupils with SEND

In cases where pupils have an EHCP, the Trust expects that the DT will work with the VSH to ensure that their EHCP works in harmony with their care plan and PEP to tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the pupil's needs are being met.

Support for LAC/CiC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

For PLAC, the SENCO, class teacher, DT 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 PLAC.

The DT and the SENCO will ensure that LAC/CiC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the 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/CiC, e.g. when 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.

10. Review

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