



Bronte Academy Trust

Looked After Child (LAC) Policy

Reviewed By	Approved By	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Next Review Date
Working Party	JB	17 Sep 18		17 Sep 20
DH	JB	13 Jan 20		13 Jan 2022
DH	Trustees	12 th Sept 23		12 th Sept 25

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

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

Bronte Academy Trust (the Trust) 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
- Plan support for LAC realistically and using the Trust's resources efficiently in order to ensure that school meets their needs
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to 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
- 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 (2022) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Working together to Safeguard Children'

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

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

2. DEFINITIONS

"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, the Local Authority has parental responsibility
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents

Previously – LAC (PLAC) are defined as:

- Children no longer looked after by a Local Authority because they 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

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring the Trust has a coherent policy for LAC and previously LAC
- Reviewing the Trust's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance

The head teacher of the individual schools within the Trust is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties
- Feeding back to the governors on the following
 - The number of LAC and PLAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupils
 - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or 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 PLAC safe
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and PLAC
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made if necessary
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC

The Virtual school head (VSH) 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 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
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium (PP+) for LAC
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:

- Maintain an up to date roll of the LAC who are in school and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress
- Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA
- Ensure social workers, designated teachers, carers understand their role and responsibilities regarding pupil's Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- 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

The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the FSH understand the support available to LAC and PLAC
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales
- Acting as a main contact for social services and the DfE
- 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 to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupils 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
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP
- Working with the headteacher to produce an annual report to the governors which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC

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 surrounding LAC and PLAC as soon as possible due to their increase 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 or concerns affecting the care leaver

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

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and previously LAC in their classes 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 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 and previously LAC

4. PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEPs)

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

The PEP will be reviewed termly

The school will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the PEP to support the child's educational needs raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teachers and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

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 to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications
 - Out of school hours learning activities

The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or PLAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefiting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.

5. ANY INTERVENTIONS SUPPORTED BY PP+ WILL BE EVIDENCE-BASED AND IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE PUPIL. WORKING WITH AGENCIES AND THE VIRTUAL HEAD (VSH)

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

The school will co-ordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review.

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 PLAC.

Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the agencies and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.

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. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment progress.

PP+ for PLAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or PLAC.

The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.

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

6. TRAINING

The designated teacher and other Trust staff involved in the education of LAC and previously-LAC have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following

- Trust admission 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

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

7. SAFEGUARDING

The Trust recognises 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.

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.

Where a LAC or PLAC has as social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The headteacher of each individual school will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout their school to ensure that the welfare of LAC 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 or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

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 particular negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8. PUPIL MENTAL HEALTH

LAC and previously LAC 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

The designated teacher will work with outside agencies to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The Trust 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 and PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

9. SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION

Past experiences of LAC and previously LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the Trust Behaviour Policy.

The Trust will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' and recognises that suspending or excluding LAC can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having

the protection and opportunities school provides. 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'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 to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

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 considered as a last resort. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there have been serious and/or persistent breaches of the Trust's Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Where a LAC is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible. The VSH will work with the designated teacher and other relevant individuals to consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the pupil's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

The school will inform parents/carers that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

10. PUPILS WITH SEND

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.

The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher 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 designated teacher with the SENCO will ensure that LAC 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, 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

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


This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the Trustees

Declaration of Responsibility

This LAC Policy was reviewed and formally adopted by Bronte Academy Trust on

.....12th September 202.....Date

..........Signed Chair of Trustees

..........Signed Chief Executive Officer