

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy



William Hulme's Grammar School
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Rationale:

William Hulme's Grammar School (WHGS) fully integrates all Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) into the school and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of all pupils in public care, meeting their needs in a discreet and sensitive way.

Aims:

WHGS aims to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC and PLAC as for all children.
- Ensure that all LAC and PLAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of LAC and PLAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's Progress and attainment.
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

WHGS has designated teachers with responsibility for the education and welfare in school of Looked after Children in both the Primary and Secondary Phases. These are the Headteacher of the Primary Phase and the Vice Principal (Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes) respectively. WHGS also has a Governor with responsibility for the care of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (PALC).

WHGS aims to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- Stay safe.
- Be healthy.
- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic wellbeing.

Who are Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a Local Authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20).
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38).
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46).
- 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 (section 21).
- Previously looked after children are those who immediately after being in care become subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Applications for **looked after children** must be completed by the designated social worker.

Priority is given to children at the **admissions** stage for children who are looked after and previously looked after, ie a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. This is how these children are defined for admissions:

- A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of the Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions as set out in section 22 of the Children Act 1989.
- An ‘adoption order’ is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A ‘residence order’ is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian(s).

The term **‘in care’** refers only to children who are subject to a 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 – 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’** - LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Admissions

The Academy’s Admissions Policy gives priority to Looked After and Previously Looked After Children at all stages of entry to the school – Nursery, Reception (Primary), Year 7, Year 12 and in all ‘In Year’ applications. The school will also give the same priority in admission to a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. This change arises from the 2012 School Admissions Code.

Where a Local Authority considers that WHGS will best meet the needs of a child, they can ask to admit that child even when the school is full. The Local Authority must be satisfied that admission will not seriously prejudice the efficient use of resources at the school, and that the admission of the child will not pose serious risks to the child or the school. In most cases an agreement is reached locally, but if WHGS disagrees and refuses to admit the child the case can be referred to the Secretary of State. In such cases, the Secretary of State may direct the school to admit the child in care and can seek advice from the Schools Adjudicator in reaching his decision.

Monitoring the Progress of LAC and PLAC Pupils

The social worker for the LAC pupils should initiate an Electronic Personal Education Plan – E-PEP - within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC’s attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their E-PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person’s views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the E-PEP.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who all the LAC are in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know

about any LAC from other authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC and PLAC pupils. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC and PLAC pupils. The school publishes annually pen profiles for staff to raise staff awareness of the issues related to LAC and PLAC pupils and school-based support strategies. This document has been shared with other schools as an example of good practice. Key pastoral leaders have received bespoke INSET to develop understanding in supporting LAC and PLAC pupils delivered by the LA. All LAC and PLAC pupils have a designated case worker to meet his/her needs.

Partnership with Parents/Carers and Care Workers

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings (examples include EPEP and LAC reviews) are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

Links with External Agencies/Organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC and PLAC pupils. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC and PLAC pupils.

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential childcare worker.
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services.
- Education Welfare Officers.
- Youth Offending Service.
- School age parents' officer.
- School nurses.
- LA LAC teams.
- Welfare Call.
- CAMHS.

CLA Policy Review and Evaluation

We consider the LAC and PLAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan and Pupil Premium strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Rationale for Roles and Responsibilities:

LAC and PLAC pupils are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements.
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population.
- Underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. The 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by LAC and PLAC pupils have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education.
- Listening to children.
- Providing stability and continuity.
- Taking corporate responsibility.
- Promoting inclusion.
- Raising standards.
- Intervening early.
- Promoting early years experiences.
- Celebrating success.

The Designated Teacher (Supported by the Assistant Principal KS3 and Impact Centre Manager) will:

- Be an advocate for LAC and PLAC pupils within school along with the Mentors assigned.
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for CAMHS on LAC and PLAC pupils and the rest of the school community.
- Know who all the LAC and PLAC pupils are in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC and PLAC pupils, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate.
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate EPEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan.
- Keep E-PEPs and other records up to date and review EPEPs at transfer and at termly intervals; this responsibility is delegated to the Head of Student Support.
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC and PLAC pupils is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil.
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC and PLAC pupils.
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events.
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for LAC and PLAC pupils.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC and PLAC pupils transfers to another educational placement.
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required.
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc.
- Prepare reports to include:

- The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have an Electronic Personal Education Plan (PEP).
 - Their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - Their engagement, attainment and progress compared to other pupils.
 - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions compared to other pupils.
- The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 - Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC and PLAC pupils.
 - Where necessary, arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to school.
 - Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC and PLAC pupils are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

Good Practice Suggests that all School Staff will:

- Follow school procedures.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC’s progress.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC and PLAC pupils.
- Positively promote the raising of a LAC and PLAC pupils’ self-esteem.
- Ensure any LAC and PLAC pupils is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the school’s policy and guidance on LAC and PLAC pupils and respond appropriately to requests for information to support EPEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC and PLAC pupils is experiencing difficulties.
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals, and keep carers fully always informed.
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate.
- Make extra copies of reports available when required.

Policy Information and Review

Designated Lead Person/s	Ms S E Galloway, Vice Principal (Culture and Ethos) / DSL Miss L S Dalton, Head of School (Primary Phase)
Created/Reviewed	Annually
Date of last review and by whom	September 2024, Ms S E Galloway
Link Governor (if applicable)	Mr K Platts
Ratification by Local Governing Body	30/09/2024
Next Review Date	June 2025

