



**Community
School**

Igniting Potential. Nurturing Character. Empowering Futures

POST-LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (POST-LAC) POLICY

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Key Contacts

<u>Role</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Details</u>
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Acknowledgement:

- This policy is adopted with guidelines provided by Waltham Forest Virtual School for Children in Care.
- This policy is to be read alongside the Looked After Children (LAC) Policy.

The Headteacher, Designated Teacher and Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Introduction:

Looked after children	• Are children who are in the care of local authorities as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. • In relation to school admissions legislation, a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school. • Hereafter referred to as 'Children in care' (LAC).
Previously looked-after children	• Are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) because they are the subject of: a) an adoption, b) special guardianship or c) child arrangements order or d) were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. ('State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society).

As a school, we keep the following in mind:

- Self esteem
- Gaps in school experience
- Social/emotional/cognitive development
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Making and maintaining friendships
- Attachment
- Confidentiality and discretion

Roles and Responsibilities:

Governing Body	• Identify a Nominated Governor for current and former children in care. • Ensure that all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of current and former children in care. • Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they engage with training on current and former children in care, Virtual School forums and network meetings. • Ensure the school has an overview of the needs of all its current and former children in care regardless of the originating authority. • Allocate resources to meet the needs of current and former children in care. • Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs. The Governing Body will: • Monitor the academic progress of current and former children in care, through an annual report from the Head Teacher. • Ensure, where relevant, that current and former children in care are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. • Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies, practices and procedures to ensure current and former children in care achieve and enjoy their time at the school. • Ensure the school has a designated teacher for current and former children in care and that they are enabled and supported, along with the Head Teacher and other staff, to carry out their responsibilities as below • Receive a report each year setting out: – The number of looked after pupils on roll (if any) and dates of joining and/or leaving. – Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils – Their results in SATs, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils. – The number and duration of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) as a discrete group, compared to other pupils. – The destination 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. • Ensure systems are in place to share the above annual report with School Improvement Partners and OFSTED in line with current statutory requirements.
Designated Link Governor	The nominated school governor will: • Ensure that the needs of current and former children in care in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their duties.
The Designated Teacher for post Looked after Children (post-LAC)	Will act as the post-LAC advocate, target support and champion post-LAC in aspects of school life. The Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. The Designated teacher will: • Will act as the post-LAC advocate, target support and champion

	post-LAC in aspects of school life. • Is a qualified teacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for post-LAC pupils. • The Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. • Maintain an up to date record of all current and former children in care who are on the school roll. This will include: – Status i.e. care order or accommodated. – Type of Placement, i.e. foster, respite, residential. – Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number. – Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home. – SEN Code of Practice – Child Protection information when appropriate. – Baseline information and all test results. – Attendance figures – Exclusions • Ensure that there is an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP) for every Looked After Child which is completed within statutory timescales and reviewed at least termly in accordance with the placing authority's guidance. The PEP should be a 'live document' with a clear narrative, SMART targets and a meaningful Pupil Premium Plus spend. The PEP must acknowledge the child's Care Plan and other appropriate documents (e.g. EHC Plan). • Contribute to reviews and meetings on each child/young person as appropriate. • Liaise with the Virtual School of the placing authority on a regular basis • Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority. • Ensure that any underachieving Looked After Child is identified and prioritised for school-based interventions • Share information about current and former children in care appropriately and sensitively with staff. • Listen to current and former children in care and champion them within the school community. • Keep the school up-to-date with current, relevant legislation and its implication. • Report to the Governing body annually on the performance of all current and former children in care on the school roll.
All staff	All our staff will: • Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of current and former children in care, as for all pupils. • Maintain confidentiality and ensure that current and former children in care are supported sensitively. • Respond positively to requests to be the child's key trusted adult • Respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information. • Have an understanding of the key issues that may affect the learning of current and former children in care.

Information sharing:

- Information on current and former children in care will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis.

- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect current and former children in care.
- The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Admissions/ Transitions

- Emmanuel Community School will abide by the admissions code in all matters relating to the admission of current and former children in care.

Relevant legislation:

- The Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, as amended.
- Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children (2018)
- The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children (2009)

Appendix: Some useful terminology when thinking about LAC and previously LAC children.

CiC/LAC/CLA	- Children In Care, Looked After Children, Children Looked After – describes children who are in the care of the LA (Local Authority). - Children can be looked after either as a result of a care order (S31) or in agreement with their parent(s) (S20).
Care Order	An order granted by the courts following consideration of evidence that suggests it is in the best interests of the child to be accommodated/in care.
LPM – Legal Planning Meeting	A Local Authority (LA) planning meeting – looking at the evidence in preparation for entering the court arena.
LOI – Letter of Intent	Issued to parent(s) – stating the intention of the LA as they prepare to enter the court arena – or actions to be taken to prevent legal proceedings.
FGC – Family Group Conference	- Instructed by court, the LA arrange for a formal meeting involving extended family members to discuss whether there is scope/if it is viable for a family member to have the child in their care. - The meeting is facilitated by the LA.
Care proceedings	- In the court arena – evidence heard from all sides – 1) Parent(s) 2) The Local Authority and 3) Guardian Ad Litem (child's voice)
Placement Order	Specific to adoption care plans – in order for a child to be placed for adoption, the LA needs to secure a Placement Order (used to be called a Freeing Order) to allow them to eventually place a child with an adoptive family.
S20	Section 20 – a legally binding agreement between the LA and the parent(s). Parents are therefore in agreement for their child to be in care. - Parent(s) retain full PR. Parent(s) must abide by the S20 – any attempt to break the agreement may instigate a LPM and entry into the court arena. - Post-16, the young person can voluntarily 'refer' themselves.
ICO – Interim Care Order	- Court gives authority to the LA for the duration of care proceedings - a care order that cannot last indefinitely - needs a conclusion/to be resolved definitively. - See PLO definition below.
FCO – Full Care Order	- The outcome of care proceedings (if the child is to remain in care) - FCO lasts until adulthood. Case no longer in care proceedings – case concluded. - Also known as Section 31.
LTF - Long term fostering	The child is LAC until adulthood (21) and lives in a LT placement.
STF - Short term fostering	- By definition – not LTF. Case is in care proceedings – leading to either: 1) LTF or 2) return to parents or 3) SGO or 4) CAO or 5) adoption. - Child is placed with ST carers until permanency/stability is secured.
PLO – Public Law Outline	- Strict PLO timescales - 26 weeks – from entry into care to final conclusion of care proceedings. - PLO ensures there is no drift and children left in limbo not knowing what their long term care plan is.
SGO – Special Guardianship Order	- An order granted by the courts – not long term fostering but not adoption either – person with SGO is not a foster carer – they are the 'legal parent' and make decisions just as any parent would. - Once the SGO is granted, child ceases to be LAC.
CAO – Child Arrangement Order	A melding of Residency Order and Contact Order - a CAO not only dictates where the child will live and who they will be living with (like a Residency Order), but may also detail aspects such as contact with

	parent, siblings, support packages etc.
SW – Social Worker	The person who has the principle overview and responsibilities to co-ordinate all services for the child. Note: if a WF LAC moves to another borough, the SW remains the same – that child will always be a WF LAC. Similarly, you may have a LAC from another borough (eg Tower Hamlets) who resides in WF and attends your WF school – they are not a WF LAC, they ‘belong’ to another borough.
SSW – Supervising Social Worker	Not the child’s social worker – the SSW is the social worker for the foster carer. They support the placement and the carer (rather than the child per se).
In-house foster carer	- WF’s own foster carers. Some are specifically approved as short term carers – some are long term approved. - As is often the case in many LAs, we do not have enough FCs, so often have to use PVI carers. - Or we may not have the ‘right’ FC for a particular child. - Or it may be that the child needs to live a significant distance from WF for a number of reasons.
PVI – Private Voluntary and Independent	- Agencies (and their carers) who are not ‘in-house’. - Many PVIs offer specialist services – examples: large sibling groups, children with sexualised behaviours, children with challenging SEMH and SEBD profiles, children with profound and complex health needs etc.
FC - Foster carer	- An approved foster carer – one who has been trained, been presented to panel and approved. - They may be approved for a certain age, or approved as either short term or long term. - They are subject to annual reviews and on-going training, support and professional development.
Connected persons carer (formerly ‘kinship’ carer)	- Not to be confused with a private arrangement between family members. - Kinship or connected persons foster care is not a private arrangement. - The carer is an approved ‘connected person’. - They are an approved foster carer – the difference between a connected persons carer and a ‘standard’ foster carer is that a connected person carer is approved for that particular child (kin) only.
IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer	- The IRO chairs the LAC reviews. They have an oversight of all aspects of the care plan – they look at the placement, education, health, contact and any other aspects of the care plan. - LAC reviews happen within 28 days of becoming LAC, then at 3 months then 6 monthly after that. - Unless there is a change in home placement and the process described above begins again.
PR – Parental Responsibility	- If the child is S20 – parent(s) retains full PR but acts in partnership with the LA. Once an ICO is in place, the LA and the parent(s) share PR but the LA has the over-riding power. - Same once the FCO is in place – LA and parent(s) share PR but (like the ICO), the LA is the Corporate Parent and makes decisions. - With SGO, parent does retain some PR but the ‘principle’ person with PR is the SG. - With adoption – PR is fully with the adoptive parent(s).