



St James Infant & Pre-School

# Looked After Children and (P)LAC Policy

Statutory / Non-statutory  
Annual review / 2 yearly review

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Reviewer's name	C Cousins			
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Next review due by	Oct 2020			



## St. James Infant School Looked After Children Policy

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children **Gail Gynn**

Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children **Louise Phelps**

The governing body of St. James Infants School is committed to providing high quality education for all of its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

### When supporting looked after children, the school will aim to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are inclusive of looked after children
- Ensure that all looked after children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and this includes the provision of a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- Ensure that looked after children take as full a part as possible in all school activities including extra curricular activities
- Ensure that carers and social workers and the Virtual School Headteacher for looked after children are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment, attendance and transition arrangements
- Ensure that appropriate intervention strategies are put in place when there is concern about a child's lack of progress
- Ensure that looked after children are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision
- Ensure all staff are appropriately trained to support the needs of looked after children.

### Who are 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 by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subject 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).

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 or they may be fostered with family members. All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' - LAC.

### **Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children**

The social worker for the looked after child should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) - within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care. Wherever possible the looked after child should be actively involved in determining their plan. It is vital that the school assesses each looked after child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning and progression. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all looked after children at regular intervals and will provide the Local Authority with termly information in line with the Virtual School pupil tracking system. The school will put in place intervention strategies to support underachievement and provide appropriate challenge for gifted and talented pupils in order that pupils are helped to fulfil their potential.

Looked after children will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

The PEP will be placed on line as part of the Virtual School monitoring and communication system. Clare Cousins (Safeguarding Lead) has responsibility for Peps at St James Infant School and keeping the online Peps up to date.

### **Post LAC or (P)LAC children**

Schools receive **£2,300** for each pupil in reception to year 11 who is recorded on the January 2019 census as no longer looked after by a local authority (LA) in England and Wales because of:

- Adoption
- A special guardianship order
- A child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order)

These pupils are referred to as post-looked after children (post-LAC).

This is set out in the [pupil premium conditions of grant](#) for the 2019-2020 financial year.

Some adopted pupils may not count

Pupils won't attract pupil premium funding under the category of children adopted from LA care if they:

- Immediately prior to adoption were being looked after in parts of the UK that aren't England or Wales - the pupil premium grant only applies to these countries
- Have been adopted from abroad
- Have been adopted but not via the LA (children adopted by a family member after the death of their parents, for example)

These pupils might still attract pupil premium funding in the other [eligibility categories](#) though, such as being entitled to free school meals.

We were told this by the [DfE](#).

### **How to prove eligibility**

People with parental responsibility are responsible for declaring their child's status to your school.

They must provide supporting evidence, such as a photocopy of the adoption order, and confirm the child was previously in care in England or Wales.

However, they may conceal sensitive information on the evidence, like the name of the birth parents, if they wish.

The only crucial information that you must be able to see on an adoption order is:

- The child's name (since they were adopted); and
- The name of the agency they were originally adopted from

If parents are unable or unwilling to provide an adoption order, they can get a letter from the LA that originally looked after the child.

This is set out on page 82 of the [school census guide](#) and in a FAQs document from Adoption UK that you can download [here](#).

### Management of spending

Schools control spending of the grant

Funding is allocated to, and then managed by, the school the pupil attends.

This is different from [pupil premium funding for looked after children](#), which is managed by your LA's virtual schools head.

This was explained to us by the DfE, who also gave us the rest of the information found in this section.

Read more about the rules on [spending the pupil premium](#).

Post-LAC funding is not ring-fenced to eligible pupils

The £2,300 funding doesn't need to be spent exclusively on the pupil it was allocated for. You have to follow the rules on spending set out in the conditions of grant, but are otherwise free to decide how best to spend the money to raise attainment.

No need to report to individual parents

You must report how you've spent all your pupil premium funding in [a report on your website](#).

However, there's no requirement to report to individual parents, because this is not a specific budget for one pupil.

Unspent funding can be carried forwards

You can carry forward some or all of the funding to future financial years.

### Admissions

We will adhere to the provision of the School Admissions Code (DfE 2012) and the Northamptonshire Fair Access Protocol to ensure that looked after children, including all previously looked after children, receive the highest priority for admission to school and are admitted swiftly to minimise disruption.

### Transition

The school will ensure that all stakeholders are provided with the appropriate information, advice and guidance to support the smooth and effective transition of looked after children and young people at all key stages.

## **Record Keeping**

The designated teacher will know the names of all the looked after children 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 looked after children from other authorities who are attending the school. It is important that the school indicates looked after children status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required. Information regarding looked after children will be stored securely.

## **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers.**

As a school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable looked after children to achieve their potential. Review meetings, which take place at least every six months, 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 looked after children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual looked after children:

- Looked After Children Education Team (LACE)
- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- SEND
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Attendance and Inclusion Service
- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service.
- Virtual Schools

## **Reporting to the Governing Body (Appendix 1)**

In order to achieve our aims and ensure we adhere to our principles, the governing body will nominate a school governor to have a specific responsibility for looked after children who will offer the school support in any way. In line with the statutory guidance, the designated teacher will provide the governing body, as a minimum, with an annual report on the progress of looked after children and young people.

## **Role of the Headteacher (Appendix 2)**

The headteacher will appoint and support a designated teacher for looked after children with suitable seniority, knowledge and experience and who will undertake some of the key responsibilities. The headteacher will consider and act on the annual report on looked after children and ensure that all staff have the full understanding of the principles and expectations for looked after children. The headteacher will regularly report to governing body the numbers of LAC children and how their needs are being met. The headteacher will monitor Pep funding and evaluate its effectiveness.

## **Role of all Staff**

- As with all children, staff will have high expectations and aspirations and celebrate educational and personal achievements.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to trust.
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour and why they may need more support and intervention than other children.

- Appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a looked after child's status.
- Appreciate the central importance of an ePEP (Personal Education Plan) in helping shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding of the child, of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.
- Liaise with the designated teacher where a looked after child is experiencing difficulties- these may be academic, pastoral, behaviour or attendance issues.
- Respond to the requests for information to support completion of ePEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Aim to ensure looked after children are not disadvantaged when places on school trips and extra-curricular opportunities arise when parental consent is required.
- Recognise that homework may present additional issues for looked after children and individual circumstances such as changes in placement, journey times to school, contact arrangements and other issues must be considered.

### **Role of the DSL (Appendix 3)**

The designated teacher will serve as a champion and advocate for all looked after children and will oversee school structures and systems that support them. He/she is the main contact for social services and The Virtual School for looked after children.

- Establish and maintain the ethos in school for looked after children.
- Set up systems to monitor, record and report on the achievements and progress of all looked after children and their emotional well-being and ensure they have the support they require within school.
- Facilitate effective communication between all parties both within the school and externally
- Have up to date knowledge of statutory and good practice guidance about looked after children.
- Train the staff in 'Attachment Awareness'

**Policy written March 2017**

**Reviewed: October 2019**

**Reviewee: C Cousins**