

## **Looked After Child (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (post-LAC) Policy**

Policy Code:	SW15
Policy Start Date:	March 2025
Policy Review Date:	March 2026

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HR8B Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy for Pupils and Parents/Carers
- HR33 Records Management Policy
- ICT2 Online Safety Policy (Staff)
- ICT3 Online Safety Policy (Pupils)
- SW5 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SW6 Anti-Bullying Policy
- SW14 Pupil Wellbeing Policy
- SW16 Freedom of Speech and Expression Policy
- SW17 Safeguarding Adults Policy
- TL6 Special Educational Needs Policy

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## **1 Policy Statement**

- 1.1 The policy outlines how the Trust will promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (post-LAC).
- 1.2 References to the Trust or Academy within this policy specifically include all primary, secondary and special academies within the Trust, as well as the Early Years setting at the Priory Witham Academy, Priory Apprenticeships and Lincolnshire SCITT.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

## **2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation**

- 2.1 The Education & Standards Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Director of Safeguarding.
- 2.2 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all member of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

## **3 Aims**

- 3.1 To ensure that:
- LAC and post-LAC have the same educational opportunities as other children;
  - all LAC and post-LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
  - a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability is provided, where applicable and where possible;
  - LAC and post-LAC take as full a part as possible in all school activities;
  - ensure that carers and social workers of LAC and post-LAC are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment; and
  - LAC and post-LAC are actively involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

## **4 Definitions**

- 4.1 Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if they are in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

1. Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20).
  2. Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38).
  3. Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46).
  4. 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).
- 4.2 All of the above groups are said to be ‘Looked After Children’ (LAC). LAC remain the responsibility of the Local Authority under which they came into the care system. Therefore, it may be that a child living in one Local Authority, e.g., Lincolnshire, is under the responsibility of a different Local Authority, e.g., Leeds.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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 or in a Children’s home.
- 4.5 The pupil premium for an academic year will include pupils recorded in the January school census and alternative provision census (of that academic year), who were looked after by an English or Welsh local authority immediately before being adopted, or who left local authority care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order). These are collectively referred to as previously looked after/post-LAC in these conditions of grant.

## **5 The Role of the Designated Teacher**

- 5.1 Each Academy has a Designated Teacher for LAC and post-LAC. In larger settings, there may be additional staff identified to support the Designated Teacher.
- 5.2 The Designated Teacher will:
- be an advocate for LAC and post-LAC within the setting;
  - be proactive in identifying ways in which the setting can raise attainment of LAC and post-LAC pupils;

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- work in partnership with Lincolnshire Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those pupils who are from other Local Authorities, providing termly progress data on the progress of LAC and post-LAC;
  - give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC and post-LAC on both those children and the rest of the school community;
  - know all the LAC and post-LAC in the setting, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required;
  - attend relevant training about LAC and post-LAC and disseminate information and good practice to other staff;
  - influence setting practice for LAC and post-LAC;
  - act as the key liaison for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC and post-LAC, seeking advice from the relevant Virtual School when appropriate;
  - ensure that LAC and post-LAC receive a positive welcome on entering the setting, especially mid-year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle;
  - ensure that all LAC have an appropriate Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is completed within 20 days of joining the setting or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan;
  - arrange and contribute to PEP Review meeting;
  - keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals;
  - monitor the targets set out in the PEP;
  - inform the Virtual School (and social worker if applicable) if the LAC or post-LAC is suspended, and liaise with key staff about attending any reintegration and/or review meetings;
  - convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of permanent exclusion;
  - inform, and consult with, the Virtual School (and social worker if applicable) if the LAC or post-LAC is going to be directed off-site for their education, or subject to a managed move;
  - invite a representative from the Virtual School (and social worker if applicable) to any review meetings linked to the child's off-site direction or managed move;
  - 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 post-LAC;
  - ensure that care and setting 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 post-LAC;

- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC or post-LAC transfers to another educational placement; and
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events.

## **6 Admissions**

- 6.1 Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter a setting mid-term. The Trust believes that it is vital that all pupils are given a positive welcome and full support for their induction to help them settle and be part of our learning community and it recognises the particular importance of ensuring a smooth transition for LAC and post-LAC. Induction processes are in place at each setting and the Designated Teacher will play a key role in any admission involving a pupil who is a LAC or a post-LAC.
- 6.2 Setting procedures to support LAC and post-LAC during admission and transition include:
- the timely transfer of information between schools/settings;
  - early identification of a staff mentor and peer buddy; and
  - structured activities to 'say goodbye' (if a pupil leaves the setting), in recognition of the impact of broken attachments.

## **7 Monitoring the Progress of LAC and post-LAC**

- 7.1 The social worker for the LAC initiates a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of the pupil joining the setting, or of entering care, and will ensure that the child or young person is actively involved. Where the child is placed in an emergency the PEP should be initiated within 10 working days of their becoming looked after. A PEP should be linked to but not duplicate or conflict with information in any other plans. Targets in the plan should be reviewed termly through a PEP review meeting.
- 7.2 Each setting will assess the LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.
- 7.3 Following the PEP meeting, the Designated Teacher's role is to inform the pupil's teachers of their targets to ensure effective support is in place in order to help the child meet their targets. They should also ensure that the funding required to support the targets is allocated appropriately.
- 7.4 The Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring systems are in place to monitor the progress of post-LAC in the setting.

## **8 Staff Training**

8.1 The Designated Teacher will have access to external training courses which they will then disseminate to staff as appropriate. Staff other than the Designated Teacher may have access to external training if it is felt appropriate to their role.

8.2 The Designated Teacher is responsible for identifying the training needs of the staff at their setting and ensuring that appropriate training and development is provided.

## **9 The Responsibilities of Teaching and Support Staff**

9.1 Teaching and Support Staff are expected to support this policy by:

- ensuring the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained;
- responding to requests for attainment/progress information in order to support the PEP process and/or monitoring processes;
- mentoring a LAC or post-LAC if requested;
- promoting positive self-esteem of LAC and post-LAC; and
- conveying high aspirations for a LAC/post-LAC's educational and personal achievement.

## **10 Liaison with External Agencies**

10.1 The Trust recognises the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC and post-LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC and post-LAC (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential child care worker.
- Lincolnshire Virtual School for LAC (Looked After Children in Education Team).
- Other Virtual Schools for LAC from other Local Authorities.
- Early Help Practitioners.
- Educational Psychologists and Local Authority SEND services.
- Medical practitioners and School Nurses.
- CAMHS/MHST/Healthy Minds.
- Education Welfare Officers/Attendance and Inclusion Teams.
- Youth Offending Service.
- Behaviour Specialists, e.g., BOSS.

## **11 Record Keeping**

11.1 The Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the records for LAC and post-LAC are up-to-date, accurate and complete.

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- 11.2 The status of LAC and post-LAC is identified within the setting's management information system, so that information is readily available as required.

## **12 Policy Change**

- 12.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by the Priory Federation of Academies Trust.

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# **The Priory Federation of Academies Trust**

## **LAC and post-LAC Policy**

This Policy has been approved by the Trust's Education and Standards Committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.