



**ALEC REED ACADEMY**  
PROUD TO LEARN

# **Looked after Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy**

**April 2018**

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## **Rationale**

Nationally, Children who are Looked After (LAC) or Previously Looked After (PLAC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Many Looked After Children have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of time at the academy. Many of these children have special educational needs (SEND). The gaps in their learning and in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. Attainment data for LAC and PLAC shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non LAC.

Helping Looked After Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Alec Reed Academy. This policy takes account of:

- Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After (CLA).
- The Education (Admission of Children Looked After. (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors) and other guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- White Paper: Care Matters - Time for Change (2007)
- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (The 2008 Act)
- The Designated Teacher (2009)
- Promoting the Education of Looked after Children (2014)
- Ealing Pupil Premium Policy (2017)
- Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 ("The 2017 Act")
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

- A child "looked after by the local authority" is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989
- A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from "state care" outside England and Wales.

Alec Reed Academy's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC) and previously looked after children (PLAC) is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Supporting transition from KS3 and onto KS5

- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Student voice
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing exclusions
- Working in partnerships with carers, social workers, Horizons (Ealing only), Virtual Schools Head (VSH) and other professionals

### **Implications**

Alec Reed Academy is committed to helping every Looked After Child and previously looked after children (PLAC) to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This is fully supported by the Governing Body of the Academy. The success of this aim may be measured by improvements in a pupil's academic and pastoral progress, achievement and attendance. See *"A high quality of education provides the foundation for transforming the lives of children in care"* (White Paper Care Matters: Time for a Change, DfES 2007).

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure that Looked After Children and (previously looked after children (PLAC) are prioritised in the Academy's admissions criteria, in line with the Education and Inspection Act 2006 (Admission of Looked After Children, England). These require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to LAC in their admissions criteria ahead of other applicants. Looked-after children and previously looked-after children, as defined in the Academy's Admission Code, have the highest priority within all mainstream school admission arrangements. The admission requirements for looked-after and previously looked-after children are set out in the Academy's Admissions Code. This Code applies to maintained schools and academies, including free schools.
- Ensure a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC) is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is in place, implemented and regularly reviewed for every Looked After Child, in line with each Local Authority's guidelines/provision.
- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for Looked After Children.

This policy links with a number of other Academy policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Children Looked After when reviewing them:

- Admissions criteria
- The Academy Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Home Academy Agreement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

The Academy will champion the needs of Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC), raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of the Governing Body**

- Identify a nominated Governor for Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC)
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC)
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC), through funding from Pupil Premium Plus.
- Ensure the Academy's other policies and procedures support the needs of Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC)

### **Procedures**

- Monitor the academic progress of Looked After Children previously looked after children (PLAC) through an annual report produced by the Designated Teacher (see below).
- Ensure that Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC) are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the Academy's admissions criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of academy, by ensuring the academy implements policies and procedures (alternative provision) to ensure Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC) achieve and enjoy their time at the academy, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them, and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- Ensure that the academy has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the CEO, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After

Children (PLAC) are recognised and met.

Receive a report once a year setting out:

1. The number of LAC pupils on the Academy's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
3. Their SAT scores, GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of Fixed Term and Permanent Exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the Academy.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

Governors should be aware that all schools are required to have a Designated Teacher for LAC. It is strongly recommended that this person/s should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through Ealing's Looked After Children Education Service.

The Designated Teachers at ARA is currently Kirsten Windsor - Assistant Principal: Director of Pupil Support

Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), monitoring how the academy has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

### **Academy Exclusions**

In line with the DfE's statutory guidance on *Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England*. Headteachers should avoid, as far as possible excluding Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC). If the academy has concerns about a LAC's behaviour, the Virtual School's Head (VSH) will be informed at the earliest opportunity. This would allow the VSH and other professionals to:

- Consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put into place to address the causes of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for exclusion.
- Make any additional arrangements to support the child's ongoing education in the event of exclusion.

### **Special Educational Needs**

The majority of looked after children have special education needs. Of those, a significant proportion will, subject to transition arrangements resulting from changes introduced by the Children and Family Act 2014, have a statement of special educational needs. Statements have now been replaced by Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. The academy will ensure that:

- The child's EHC plan will work in harmony with his or her care plan to

tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the child's needs are being met.

- Some children may have undiagnosed special needs when they start to be looked after. As part of the PEP process, there are robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are addressed through the SEND framework as soon as possible.

### **Duties and responsibilities of the CEO**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (Assistant Principal: Director of Pupil Support) whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the academy or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children (LAC) and previously looked after children (PLAC) and take immediate action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children and previously looked after children (PLAC). OFSTED will select a number of Looked After Children and PLAC, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure that staff in academy receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

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

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the academy shares and supports high expectations for them". From September 2009, the governing bodies of all maintained schools are required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 to appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of LAC who are on the academy role.

### **Our Designated Teacher will liaise with and oversee key staff & external professionals to:**

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for transition in consultation with the child's social worker
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and that the relevant Pastoral staff have contributed to the process.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they may talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by the relevant Pastoral Staff. They

should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely with the Academy's designated teacher for child protection.

- Track and monitor academic progress and target support appropriately liaising with the SENCo as necessary. Coordinate any support for Looked After Children and PLAC within the Academy.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage Looked After Children and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of academy learning. Where necessary Pupil Premium Plus funding should be made available to allow LAC pupils to access a full range of extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance of key staff at planning and Looked After Children Review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children and PLAC.
- Communicate/set up timely meetings with relevant parties (carer, social worker, the Virtual School) when the pupil is experiencing difficulties in the Academy or is at risk of exclusion.
- Liaise with all professionals and agencies working with the Looked After Child and PLAC where appropriate.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and, if the pupil changes to a new school.
- The choice of the education setting should be based on what any good parent would want for their child. It should be based on evidence that the setting can meet the individual needs of the child and help them make the maximum progress.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education (connexions, college, 6<sup>th</sup> form).
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in the Academy by raising awareness through the Academy's anti-bullying policy.
- Be aware that 51% of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children have Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire scores which were "border line" or a cause for concern and an increased likelihood of experiencing mental or social, emotional health issues than their peers. Given this, ensure that Academy's staff have the skills, knowledge and interagency relationships to manage and support looked after and previously looked after children facing these challenges.
- Promote inclusion in all aspects of Academy life. Exclusion should only be used as a last resort, and all other strategies and support mechanisms must be explored first. Where exclusion is considered to be the only option, the Virtual School should be contacted in order to provide alternative provision for the term of the exclusion
- Ensure that attendance & achievement data is returned to the relevant Local Authority LAC Education Service team every term.
- Ensure that all staff have relevant training for Children Looked After

needs and of this policy, to enable them to positively promote their education.

- Contribute to the development and review of whole Academy policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put LAC and PLAC at a disadvantage.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of all Staff**

#### **All our staff will:**

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff to whom they may talk with.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability within Academy.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.
- Be aware that 60% of LAC say that they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the Academy's policy.

### **Pupil Premium Plus Grant**

For students coming into care after September 4<sup>st</sup> 2017, Pupil Premium Plus will be allocated on a pro-rata basis. The allocation of this grant will be agreed at the first PEP (Personal Education Plan) meeting between the child, carer, parent (where present), Virtual School Teacher, Designated Teacher and Social Worker/s.