




Hunnyhill Primary School

Date of Review	January 2025
Next Review Due	January 2026
Staff Responsibility	Designated Teacher for LAC
Notes / Source	Legal Framework updated Information Sharing – embedded within section 5. Working with agencies and the VSH. Previously individual item (section 11).
Signed by Chair of Governors	

Looked after Child (LAC) / Previously LAC (PLAC) Policy

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal Framework
2. Definitions
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. PEP
5. Working with agencies and the VSH
6. Training
7. Safeguarding
8. Pupil Mental Health
9. Suspension and Exclusions
10. Pupils with SEND
11. Monitoring and Review

Statement of Intent

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of Looked after Children (LAC). Pupils who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Schools can provide a continuity, stability and 'normality' for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption. School can be a place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of Looked after Children and schools play a vital role in this.

Hunnyhill Primary School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their personal, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality inclusive teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for Looked after Children and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils to develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2023) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2. Definitions

'Looked after Child' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a court makes a Care Order. These children are subject to corporate parenting.

This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory Guidance on the duty on Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and associated guidance on the education of Looked after Children.

Looked after Children (LAC) are defined as:

- Children who are provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours under the Children Act 1989, sections 20 and 21.
- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989, part 4.

- Children who are subject to a placement order.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with parents.

Previously Looked after Children (PLAC) are defined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by a LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order.
- Children who were adopted outside of England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and Designated Teacher for LAC or Designated Person for PLAC, as the staff responsible for ensuring that all Looked after Children / PLAC have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with LAC.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and Previously LAC.
- Complying with their duties under legislation, having regard to the KCSIE guidance and ensuring that policies, procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Adopting a whole school approach to safeguarding arrangements and child protection, ensuring it is central to the school's processes.
- Holding the school to account on how it supports LAC and PLAC, including how the Pupil Premium+ is used and their level of progress.
- Working with the LA to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.
- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of LAC and PLAC and reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring that there are no unintended barriers to the admission of LAC and PLAC either at normal transition or any other point of the school year.
- Appointing a Designated Teacher (DT), who is appropriately qualified to support the educational achievement of LAC.
- Ensuring the Designated Teacher for LAC has access to appropriate training, resources and support.
- Ensuring the Designated Person for PLAC has access to appropriate training, resources and support.
- Ensuring that the appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each LAC's:
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or an interim full care order).
 - contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority designated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring that LAC and Previously LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the Designated Teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.

- Ensuring they receive feedback from the Head Teacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

The Virtual School Head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and evaluating the educational attainment and progress of LAC as if those children attended a single school.
- Monitoring the attendance of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education experiences and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the Designated Teachers understand the support available to LAC and Previously LAC.
- Working with the school so all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting an educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of Previously LAC as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for LAC.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - Inform the Headteacher and Designated Teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
 - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's personal education plan (PEP).
 - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
 - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
 - Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the Designated Teacher for LAC and the Designated Person for PLAC.
- Allowing the Designated Teacher, the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the Governing Body annually on the following:
 - The number of LAC and PLAC on roll.
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups.
 - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups.
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
 - Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
 - Ensuring PP+ for PLAC is managed effectively.
 - Promoting the advantages and of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.
 - Understanding the role of the VSH and working with them to promote the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC.

The Designated Teacher for LAC / Designated Person for PLAC are responsible for:

The Designated Teacher will serve as the contact for Social Services and the Education Department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support Looked after Children within the school. This includes

serving as an advocate for all Looked after Children in the school. The Designated Teacher / Designated Person will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding Looked after Children of the school by:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school; this includes those who have left care through adoption, are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Acting as a main contact for social services and the DFE. At Hunnyhill Primary School the main contact for social services is delegated to the Inclusion Lead/Deputy DSL.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one to one tuition.
- Leading on how the PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies affecting LAC and PLAC.
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand what can affect how LAC and PLAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- The Designated Teacher at Hunnyhill Primary School is also the SENCO; all SEN needs are considered in the implementation of the PEP.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement the PEP.
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Working with the Headteacher to submit an annual report to the Governing Body, which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Attending LAC Reviews.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping-up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and PLAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, Designated Teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PLAC. The Designated Teacher at Hunnyhill Primary School is also the SENCO; all SEN needs are considered in the implementation of the PEP.

Teaching staff and Support Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences.
- Developing an understanding of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the LA looking after the pupil.
- Understanding the importance of involving the pupil's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education.

- Being a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their pupil's progress at school.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and Previously LAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and Previously LAC.

4. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The Designated Teacher works with all local authorities and complies with their chosen formats for PEPs. The Isle of Wight and Hampshire Virtual Schools have implemented e-PEPs, which are facilitated by ASSET. PEPs are graded by the Virtual Schools, in line with ASSET systems.

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The PEP will be reviewed termly.

The school is aware that, wherever a pupil is placed, it is the responsibility of their social worker, supported by the authority's VSH, to initiate a PEP and arrange to meet with the school and the pupil's carer. The Designated Teacher for LAC or the Designated Person for PLAC will communicate with the VSH and the child's Social Worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.

The school will ensure that children's PEPs reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the pupil and will be reviewed termly. The DT will liaise with the VSH and social workers to share information and act as the in-school lead on how the PEP is developed and used to make sure the pupil's progress towards education targets is monitored. The DT will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the pupil's PEP are implemented without delay.

The school with other professionals and the child's carers, will collaborate to ensure completion of the PEP and that the PEP is used as a working document to support the child's educational needs, raise aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the Designated Teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages in order to address the pupil's full range of educational and developmental needs, including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support provided by the LA, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant National Curriculum Key Stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The VSH and the Designated Teacher, in collaboration with the pupil, carer and other professionals will ensure that that information is included within a LAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding. PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress. Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

Hunnyhill Primary School has a Pupil Premium Lead who is accountable for Pupil Premium+ spending for PLAC. The Pupil Premium Lead will collaborate with the Designated Teacher to agree on how Pupil Premium+ will be allocated.

The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or Previously LAC, according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and Previously LAC. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

5. Working with agencies and the VSH

The school is aware that strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is vital to identifying and responding to the needs of LAC and PLAC.

The school will work proactively and collaboratively with other professionals in other agencies and organisations in line with the framework of expectations outlined in the government's [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) statutory guidance document by:

- Collaborating with services to achieve shared goals and share information.
- Learning from evidence and sharing perspective to evaluate provision.
- Prioritising and sharing resources depending on pupils' needs.
- Celebrating inclusivity and diversity and challenging discrimination.
- Mutually and constructively challenging others' assumptions in a respectful manner.

Information Sharing

The school recognises the importance of proactive information sharing between professionals and local agencies in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. Staff will be made aware that whilst the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place a duty on schools to process personal information fairly and lawfully, they also allow for information to be stored and shared for safeguarding purposes, as data protection regulations do not act as a barrier to sharing information where failure to do so would result in the pupil being placed at risk of harm.

If staff members are in doubt about sharing information and data protection legislation, they will be encouraged to speak to the DSL.

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data will be put in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and PLAC are understood and met. The arrangements set out will include:

- Who has access to information on LAC and PLAC and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

School staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils. This will include sharing information about any adults with whom a pupil has contact, which may impact the pupil's safety or welfare, where necessary.

The school will aim to be as transparent as possible by telling families what information they are sharing and with whom, provided that it is safe to do so.

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers of LAC, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The Designated Teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation. The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as

changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and Previously LAC.

The school will co-ordinate the PEP review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with the Statutory Care Review.

6. Training

The Designated Teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and Previously LAC will receive the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- School admission arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- Managing challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding
- SEMH

The governing board will ensure that staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC and PLAC safe through training.

7. Safeguarding

The school is aware that LAC and PLAC most commonly become looked after because of abuse and/or neglect and because of this, they can be at potentially greater risk in relation to safeguarding.

The school recognises that many LAC and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.

Where a looked-after child or previously looked-after child has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to absence from education where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a looked-after child or previously looked-after child is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a LAC or PLAC is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the school will collaborate in the multi-agency strategy discussion where appropriate to determine the pupil's welfare and plan rapid further action as necessary. The school's representative at any strategy discussion meetings will be sufficiently senior, skilled and experienced, and authorised to make decisions on the school's behalf. Information and analysis about the pupil and their family will be provided as required.

8. Pupil Mental Health

All staff will be made aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

LAC and Previously LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated Teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The Designated Teacher will work with the VSH to ensure school staff are able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and Previously LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and PLAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the Designated Teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with LAC or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

A Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) will be used at least annually (termly for those pupils who have identified SEMH needs) to help Social Workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC's (and Previously LAC's where necessary) current emotional well-being. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist in the assessment.

A PEP Toolkit will be used annually to help the Designated Teacher to identify areas of strength and difficulty. Teachers will complete the PEP Toolkit to assist the identification of areas of need. This will be used to focus the outcomes and targets set for LAC.

The school's Mental Health Lead will work alongside the Designated Teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC and PLAC. Hunnyhill Primary's Mental Health Lead is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Inclusion Lead.

The school's SEMH Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that LAC or PLAC may face.

9. Suspension and Exclusion

Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy and Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance '[Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#)' and recognises that suspending or excluding LAC can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides. The headteacher will balance this recognition alongside the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all staff and pupils, devising strategies that take both into consideration.

Where the school has concerns about a LAC's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

As part of the termly review of a pupil's PEP, any concerns about their behaviour will be recorded, alongside information on how they are being supported to improve this and reduce the likelihood of exclusion.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy, or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Where a looked-after child is at risk of being suspended or permanently excluded, the school will engage with the pupil's parents, or other individuals involved in the pupil's care. The Designated Teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible to work together, and with other relevant individuals, to consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the pupil's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

Where a looked-after child is excluded, the school will document the provision of immediate suitable education in the pupil's PEP.

Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.

10. Pupils with SEND

In cases where pupils have an EHCP, the DT will work with the VSH to ensure that their EHCP works in harmony with their care plan and PEP to tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the pupil's needs are being met.

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews. At Hunnyhill Primary School, the SENCO is also the Designated Teacher who works in collaboration with class teachers, carers and specialists to consider interventions to support the child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for Previously LAC.

The Designated Teacher / SENCO will ensure that LAC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Designated Teacher and the Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2026.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.