

LAC Policy

Croyland Primary School

August 2025

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:	Lucy Deakin
PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:	Lucy Deakin & Tracy Elliott
APPROVED:	August 2025
SIGNED:	Headteacher
TO BE REVIEWED	December 2027 or sooner if required

Policy for Looked - After Children and Previously Looked-After Children at Croyland Primary School

This policy will be reviewed and updated approximately every two years, or sooner if required by changes in government legislation.

Responsible persons:

- Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DT): Lisa Carroll
- Designated member of staff for Previously Looked After Children (P)LAC: Ruth Crawford
- Designated Governor for the monitoring of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children at Croyland: Tracy Elliott
- Headteacher : Lucy Deakin

Policy Rational:

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are together, one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children have suffered a disrupted childhood and experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences. It is nationally recognised that this leads to a considerable educational underachievement; often lower exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and wellbeing.

Our responsibilities encompass:

- Providing a safe and supportive environment for all LAC and PLAC students, where their educational experiences are valued, high aspirations are fostered, and a belief in their potential is maintained.
- Ensuring that all LAC and PLAC students have access to appropriate support to enable them to enjoy, learn, and achieve alongside their peers.
- Developing and implementing policies and procedures for LAC and PLAC that align with the duties outlined in 'The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance on their Roles and Responsibilities,' DfE, February 2018.

At Croyland Primary School, all staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities concerning looked-after and previously looked-after children. They also recognise the various barriers these children may face that can hinder their potential.

We are fully committed to supporting this group of children. Our evaluation of our provision is guided by a simple question: "Would this be good enough for my own child?"

This policy clearly outlines how, as a school community, we can collectively ensure that we answer "yes" to that question.

Core documents and reference resources P (LAC):

Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE, February 2018)

The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (DfE, February 2018).

The Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years: Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (DfE, 2015).

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy:

- a '*looked-after child*' is defined as:
 - A child or young person who is the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
 - A child who is placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
 - A child who is subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
 - A child who is not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents or respite care.

- a '*previously looked-after child*' is defined as:
 - A child who is no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
 - A child who was adopted outside 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).

Looked-after children (LAC) / children in care (CIC):

Our governing body designates a member of staff (the designated teacher) to lead upon and promote the educational achievement of LAC registered pupils at our school. The designated teacher (DT) is a qualified teacher who has undertaken appropriate training (e.g. has a good knowledge of the needs of LAC; including special educational needs and social, emotional and mental health support). They are also recognised for their superb organisation and communication skills. This person is responsible for organising and leading the PEP meetings and for ensuring that appropriate targets and arrangements are in place for all of our CIC.

Previously looked-after children (PLAC):

Our governing body also designates a member of staff to lead upon and promote the wellbeing of PLAC registered pupils at our school. They have also undertaken appropriate training and have a deep knowledge and understanding of social, emotional and mental health needs.

Where a child is identified as PLAC, the parent will be asked for the appropriate paper work which confirms their child's PLAC status.

For children adopted outside England and Wales, in order to receive this status, the child must have been looked-after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, the designated teachers will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, discussion will be had regarding eligibility with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to agree our approach.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The role of the Governing Body

Governors have key responsibilities for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), ensuring their educational well-being and progress. This includes appointing a designated teacher, monitoring their performance, and holding the school accountable for their support.

Their specific responsibilities include ensuring:

- Our admissions practices continue to give LAC & PLAC the highest priority admission to the school, as outlined within 'School Admissions' DfE guidance 2014.
- The twice annually LAC & PLAC monitoring report is scrutinised to ensure that the academic progress of LAC & PLAC is effectively being tracked and challenged, and that staff have the training and resources needed to support this group of children.
- PP and PP+ spending is used appropriately and effectively.
- Resources are available to address the needs specific to LAC & PLAC, and that disparity in academic progress in comparison to their peers within school, including patterns in attendance and exclusion are highlighted and swiftly addressed.
- An appropriate member of staff is appointed as Designated Teacher, who has access to training and resources (including time) to undertake their responsibilities, and has the seniority to influence Senior leadership, to meet and champion the needs of LAC & PLAC throughout the school.
- All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC/PLAC.

The Headteacher:

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that:

- The role of the Designated Teacher (DT) is filled by an appropriate member of staff at all times (including arrangements to allow for staff absences and resignation).

The DT should have the seniority to work with Senior Leadership, Governors and all staff to provide information, advice and champion the achievement and needs of LAC & PLAC.

- The DT is provided with the time to fulfil their role and completes the LA Statutory Designated Teacher Training every two years as well as any other training to assist with the fulfilment of their duties.
- Policies and procedures to monitor and address the needs of, and support for LAC & PLAC are in place and adhered to, with reference to academic progress, admissions, attendance, safeguarding and exclusions, and that swift action is taken when concerns arise.
- The curriculum delivered reflects the needs of children with attachment and trauma needs.

The role of the designated teacher/staff member for supporting LAC/ (P) LAC at CPS:

At Croyland Primary School, the Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (P-LAC) collaborates as part of a dedicated team committed to supporting the needs of this potentially very vulnerable group of pupils.

Together the team:

- serve as advocates for looked-after children within the school. They ensure ongoing professional development and training are accessible, enabling staff to effectively support students with LAC and P-LAC backgrounds, including understanding and managing associated behaviours.
- know all the looked-after children within the school, including those in care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- ensure any LAC new to the school are welcomed positively and assessed when they start at the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching
- work with all Virtual Schools in the appropriate authorities to promote the education of (P) LAC and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every (P) LAC matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
- manage PP+ for Previously Looked After Children to support educational attainment and personal development
- produce two annual reports to the governing body which should include current progress, attendance and exclusions (if any) and any concerns
- take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how (P) LAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:
 - are 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, and how this might affect the child's behaviour
 - understand how important it is to see (P) LAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their (P) LAC status
 - appreciate the central importance of LAC PEPs in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported
 - have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child
 - are a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are (P) LAC
 - understand and implements Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of (P) LAC, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there
 - (for PLAC), understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school

- Following the completion of termly PEP meetings (using ePEP online), a member of the team will share the educational targets with the child to ensure they have an opportunity to achieve them

Specific responsibilities for looked-after children:

Our (P) LAC Team also play a direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of individual children. In their collaboration with the many professionals involved with a (P) LAC, they ensure that the systems and practices in our school:

- do not unintentionally put (P) LAC at a disadvantage
- provide effective induction and support for (P) LAC and their families when starting school, are new to the school and/or are new to care
- take into account the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what they can achieve
- identify any (P) LAC as having specific interests and talents
- identify any (P) LAC who face additional safeguarding challenges of which the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should be aware of
- identify any (P) LAC that have special educational needs (SEN) and outline how those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level
- identify any (P) LAC have mental health needs and outline how those needs are being met
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of LAC PEPs within school in partnership with others as necessary
- incorporate communication and collaboration between the DT, DSL and a child's social worker to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding (P) LAC are quickly and effectively responded to
- do not include any barriers to (P) LAC accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for LAC to attend meetings)
- ensure that the (P) LAC have a named person in school who they can talk to and trust – this will usually be someone working with the class or any appropriate adult with whom the child has formed a relationship with

Specific responsibilities for Post Looked after Children:

When supporting a post looked after child, a member of the (P) LAC team will contact the Virtual School for information and advice on meeting the needs of this child, if they are new to Croyland Primary School.

Our (P) LAC team fully involves parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education and their individual needs.

It is their responsibility to ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of vision and ethos of our school and the school's approach to the curriculum as well as how their child can be additionally

supported within the home. This responsibility is undertaken alongside the child's class teacher and any other member of staff employed to support the child.

The Croyland School Community:

At Croyland Primary School, as 'corporate parents' all school staff are expected to:

- positively promote the self-esteem and mental wellbeing of (P) LAC
- have high expectations of and celebrate the educational and personal achievements of (P) LAC
- keep the (P) LAC team informed about the progress of a of (P) LAC as well as any difficulties that the child may be experiencing with appropriate strategies and targets put in place to support where necessary
- respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEP and review meetings
- keep appropriate and necessary records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the (P) LAC team
- have a solid understanding (and/or training where necessary) of how (P) LAC may be affected (academically or otherwise) by previous trauma/attachment related to the child being looked after and how to accommodate this within the classroom appropriately

SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND PROCESS:

Admissions/ Assessment of Need

Admissions (See Admissions Policy and Arrangements for detail) Croyland Primary School acknowledges and ensures that LAC & PLAC are given priority for School Admissions.

We work collaboratively with the Virtual School regarding any concerns that we might have in relation to the admission of LAC & PLAC. The Designated Teacher attends LAC & PLAC admissions meetings and works closely alongside the Virtual School, Social Worker, Carers and any other professionals to ensure that children feel supported, and have a successful smooth transition into school life

At Croyland Primary School, when a child joins the school either at the beginning of, or during, the school year, the designated teacher ensures his or her specific educational and developmental needs are accurately and comprehensively assessed without delay. This assessment of needs forms the basis for the development or review and refinement of the PEP. The PEP must be a living document. Through their time in school, The DT, class teacher, subject teachers, inclusion Leader and Headteacher contribute to the information recorded within the PEP, as necessary

Attendance

(The attendance of LAC is carefully monitored and reported daily to Welfare Call / the Local Authority. Parents and Carers of LAC & PLAC will be contacted regarding unauthorised absences daily. Concerns regarding attendance including identified patterns of absence will be raised with parents, carers, social workers and professionals.

Voice of the child:

Listening to the voice of (P) LAC is a vital part to successfully understanding their needs and make a successful plan to support them. To enable this, our (P) LAC team ensures that:

- time is made available within the team to get to know the child
- support is provided when a child is upset or angry and time is given to listen to them when they need help
- the provision for the child is reviewed regularly based on their voice and needs
- a strong partnership is made between the school, VS/social worker, and carer
- the child's wishes and voice is heard and communicated to all involved, at each termly PEP meeting

The Personal Education Plan: Expectation and Practice at CPS:

PEPs are a legal requirement for all looked-after children. The PEP is a crucial part of a child's overall care plan, focusing specifically on their educational progress and attainment.

The Personal Education Plan or PEP is a record of how professionals around the looked after child will support their educational outcomes and achievement. It is developed and reviewed termly with the designated teacher, young person, social worker, carer and virtual school.

PEP's can improve educational outcomes for the named child by helping everyone gain a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet the child's educational needs and how that will be provided.

The school and local authority for the looked after child have a shared responsibility for the PEP. In practice, this means that the DT, VSH and allocated social worker work together to develop the PEP, taking account of the child's views (where appropriate and possible).

Social workers should not take decisions about a looked after child's education without reviewing the PEP in consultation with the school, child, carer, parent (if appropriate), VS and the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

The Designated Teacher is then responsible for leading on the development and implementation of the PEP within the school.

When a child on the school's roll becomes looked after, the Local Authority which looks after him or her, must ensure that the Designated Teacher is notified and receives a basic initial PEP (within 20 days of entering care or 10 days for emergency placements).

If a child has been looked after for some time, the PEP should also include information about previous educational progress and how s/he learns best.

PEP's should be developed and reviewed through a meeting attended by the allocated social worker, the Designated Teacher, the child (if appropriate), carers, parents (if appropriate) and where possible, a representative from the Virtual School.

Unaccompanied asylum seekers or refugee children are entitled to the same local authority support to promote their educational outcomes as any other LAC.

The PEP in practice at CPS:

Our DT plays a key role in making sure the PEP is effective in supporting everyone to help the child make good educational progress. It includes for the child:

- developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences
- short and long-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child and their class teacher (and carer where appropriate)
- planned actions that the school and others will take to promote the educational achievement of the child, based on an assessment of their educational needs
- the child's academic progress and details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to ensure PEP targets are met
- detail any additional support which will happen, or is already happening (e.g. action to support special educational needs involving the SENCO, educational psychologist, or local authority education services)
- information on what will happen or is already happening to identify and support any mental health needs relevant to the child's education
- the child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective (if/ when possible and appropriate)
- the child's academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning activities (e.g. sporting, personal development)
- information which helps all who are supporting the child's educational achievement to understand what works for them, helping to substitute for the role that parents might otherwise provide
- accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen

Transfer of PEPs:

The DT is fundamental in helping looked after children, make a smooth transition to their next school. This includes the speedy transfer of the child's school records to a new school and ensuring the child's PEP is up to date. The new school should be invited to the child's final PEP at their current school where possible.

Exclusions:

Croyland Primary School will act within our best endeavours to avoid permanently excluding any child.

Advice and support from the Local Authority (Social workers, the Virtual School)will be sought where it is felt that a LAC or PLAC may become at risk of exclusion. Support and alternatives to exclusion will be considered.

Where a fixed term exclusion of a LAC is unavoidable, parents/carers and the Virtual School will be contacted prior to the child leaving the school site and work will be provided to avoid further gaps in education. Plans and support will be put in place to avoid further exclusion on the child's return to school.

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG/PP+)

Pupil Premium Grant for LAC is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that children meet the targets outlined within their PEP.

Under the advice of the DT, the grant is used to implement targeted interventions and support strategies to improve the educational outcomes of previously looked after/looked-after children.

Additional Information: Language that carers



The A-Z of using the appropriate language when talking about children in care.

https://www.tactcare.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/03/TACT-Language-that-cares-2019_online.pdf

This information came from a document that focuses on the voice of those children and young people who are in, have come through the care system.

We need to use this preferred language in communication with our looked after pupils.

B – Birth/Biological parents

We prefer: parents, family, mum or tummy mum, dad

- You should ask each child individually what they like calling their family members and share this with the appropriate and necessary staff members
- The words can also be excluding and disadvantageous to birth parent and it is important for these to be considered as well

C – Care leaver

We prefer: care experienced adult

- “Care” can mean anything as it has a wide definition, “care experienced” is preferred

C – Care plan

We prefer: future plan, my plan

- “Care” is overused and some children feel it is too common and would rather not hear it

C – Challenging behaviour

We prefer: having trouble coping, difficult thoughts

C – CIC review

We prefer: my meeting, my review meeting, (child's name) review

- It is the child's meeting to talk about what is happening and what is good and bad

C – Contact

We prefer: making plans to see our family, family meet up time

- "Seeing family" seems more "normal" than "contact"

D – Designated teacher

We prefer: teacher

- "Saying "a teacher you can talk to" is less obvious than "designated" teacher which can make a child feel like they stand out

D – Difficult to place

We prefer: can't find a home good enough

- "Difficult to place" makes it sound like it's the child's fault

F – Foster carer

We prefer: my family, foster, mum, foster dad, my new family

- Children use different words in different contexts, always check with the child which term they want to be used

H – High aspirations

We prefer: good choices

I – In care

We prefer: another home away from home, living with a different family in a different home

L – LAC visit

We prefer: home visit, catch up, (child's name) visit

L – LAC/foster child

We prefer: call children by their names, young people or children

- Every child is looked after so there is no need to make specific children stand out
- The acronym LAC can sound to the child like they are "lacking" in something

M – Moving placements

We prefer: moving to a new house/home, a new chapter, a fresh start

P – Peers

We prefer: friends

P – PEP

We prefer: school review, education meeting, education plan

- Some adults/staff use the work PEP openly in school to children and this lead to other classmates needing/wanting to have the meaning explained. It makes them stand out

P – Permanence

We prefer: my home without disruptions

P – Placement

We prefer: our home, home, my house, the house where I live

- “Placement” can sometimes sound like the child is being forced to live there
- This shouldn’t be a word used for a home where a child has been living for a long time
- “Foster homes” is more a more preferable term than “placement”

R – Respite

We prefer: a break for children, day out, home away from home, stay over, time off for us

- “Respite” is too formal a term for young people
- Is can be seen as offensive as it means an escape or a break from something that is not enjoyable

S – Siblings

We prefer: our brothers and sisters, people who are related to me

- It is ok in written language but in spoken language it needs to be more informal and “normal”

S – Social worker

We prefer: one to one worker, someone who understands your family background

S – Special needs

We prefer: additionally supported

T – Therapy

We prefer: talking things through sessions

T – Transition

We prefer: preparing for change