



Lord Lawson of
Beamish Academy

LORD LAWSON OF BEAMISH ACADEMY

LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILD POLICY

Originator: Ian Cooper

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Introduction

Looked After Children (LAC) and previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are the most vulnerable groups in society; it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to other groups. Raising levels of achievement is vital to improve the life chances of LAC and PLAC; schools play a pivotal role in this.

Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy is committed to ensuring that all children receive access to a broad and balanced curriculum which motivates and inspire them to learn. The gaps in LAC and PLAC learning – and in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences – are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The school therefore carries out careful planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the best possible outcomes for our LAC and PLAC students.

Aims

The school ensures that a suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked after children and supports the wider staff to also do this. Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Definition of “Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children”

In UK law, children in care are referred to as 'looked after children'. A child is 'looked after' if they are in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours. Legally, this could be when they are:

- Living in accommodation provided by the local authority with the parents' agreement
- The subject of an interim or full care order or a permanence order
- The subject of an emergency legal order to remove them from immediate danger
- In a secure children's home, secure training centre or young offender institution
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children



A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order which includes 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.

Principles and Objectives

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after and previously Looked After Children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Personnel Responsible for Looked After Children

Academic Years	Designated Teacher for LAC	Nominated Governor
2022-2025	Mr I Cooper (Deputy Principal)	Mr C Smith

The Designated Teacher

The designated person must be a qualified teacher. The role became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Person's Act 2008. Ideally, the Designated Teacher should also be a senior member of staff who is able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning, plus promote the educational achievements of every LAC and PLAC. Some responsibilities of the Designated Teacher are to:

- Oversee the maintenance of a detailed record of all Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children – including information relating to current status, type of placement, name and contact details of Social Worker, Virtual School Head, relevant health information, SEND status, PEP information, current and historic assessment information. This information should be collated from year leaders throughout the school
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed when a child enters the school and is then reviewed at least every 6 months – this should consider the opinions of the social worker, class teacher and where possible the child and their parents/carers
- Ensure year leaders within the school review PEPs, ensuring SMART targets are used. The Designated Teacher will oversee and review this process



- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Overseeing the co-ordination of support for the child in school, liaising where necessary with other professionals and carers
- Ensure that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them
- Ensure all information remains confidential, sharing only personal information on a need to know basis
- Oversee the preparation and presentation of reports for LAC meetings. Where necessary, the Designated Teacher should attend these meetings
- Monitor the educational progress of all Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern
- Where necessary, share data and information with the Virtual School
- Produce at least one annual report to the school Governors, which should include information on staff training, links with external agencies and, for each child: current progress, attendance, exclusions (if any), concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented, and whether the plans put in place are effective in addressing the learning needs of the child. The report should not mention any child's name.

The role of the Governors

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 places a duty on the Directors to designate a member of staff (the Designated Teacher) as having responsibility to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children To this effect, the Governors should:

- Ensure that the necessary provision is being made for any student who is a Looked After Child or previously Looked After Child
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support and has the opportunity to keep up to date with relevant training
- Ensure the Designated Teacher disseminates relevant training and provides support for all members of staff that will influence teaching and learning for Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children.
- The Governors, in partnership with the Principal, are responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the Designated Teacher.



Admissions

Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy believe that the school admissions criteria should not discriminate against Looked After Children or previously Looked After Children; we therefore ensure Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children are given priority within our oversubscription criteria.

Personal Education Plans

All LAC/PLAC students must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. The PEP is a record of the child's education and forms part of the overall care plan. It provides a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision to ensure academic progress. The social worker, parents, carers and the child may be invited to the PEP meeting to ensure the views of all stakeholders are considered. The school's role in this plan is crucial, and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. In most circumstances this will be the year leader. Issues that may be discussed in the PEP include:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses
- The child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective
- The interests of the child, both in and out of school
- Developmental, educational and pastoral needs
- Future plans and how these can be supported, including the support of a career's advisor
- Issues arising for the child
- Targets and objectives that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting

The PEP should set clear targets and objectives which relate to academic achievement as well as out of school activities and, wherever necessary, behavioural targets. If a child moves school, the PEP should be forwarded, as a matter of urgency, to the new school when known. In relation to previously LAC, although they no longer require a PEP, the Designated Teachers should continue to consider their educational needs. The Designated Teacher should maintain links with the Virtual School who must make advice and information available, in order to promote the educational achievement of this group of previously looked-after children.