Grove Learning Trust

Creating Remarkable Futures

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

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Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Author (AU) / Approver (AP)
Draft 01	22/11/24	Completion of first draft	AW (AU)
Final – A		Signed off by Standards & Performance Committee of Board of Trustees	Trust Board (AP)
	06/11/25	Review of policy to ensure reflective of current legislation	BG (AU)

Vision & Values

As one organisation, our vision for Grove Learning Trust is unapologetically bold. We are all about **creating remarkable futures.** For our children, our people, our places of work, we want the very best. We know that strong connections will enable us to achieve our vision, in a world where purposeful collaboration, based on mutual respect and trust, helps us to achieve more together.

Trust >> Connect >> Collaborate

Our policies underpin our vision and set out clearly our expectations of each other.

About this policy

- **Purpose** of the policy - why the policy exists and what it aims to achieve for GLT and employees
- **Scope** – who does the policy apply to and the specific areas of work the policy covers
- **Who is responsible** for the policy – include who employees can direct any questions to, and if applicable outline any appeals processes
- **Regulatory compliance / legislation** – include any legal and regulatory requirements that must be met
- **Related policies** – reference any related policies / those to be read in conjunction with

Context

At Grove Learning Trust we recognise that pupils in public care or previously in care, nationally underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children (LAC) are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. Helping LAC and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Grove Learning Trust. In line with the approach identified in the admissions code, this policy considers both children in the care of the local authority and those who have been.

Aims

The key purpose of this policy is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children as defined under section 52 of the Children's Act 2004 and amended as Children and Families Act 2014. At Grove Learning Trust, we believe that all looked after children and previously looked after children should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and should be able to achieve their full potential. All staff, trustees and academy committee governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life opportunities for LAC and PLAC. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

Grove Learning Trust's approach to supporting the educational achievement of LAC & PLAC is based on the following principles:

- prioritising education, ensuring LAC and PLAC children receive the targeted support they need based on their individual needs
- ensuring early intervention to support the needs of LAC and PLAC
- promoting attendance
- having high expectations and promoting high aspirations
- promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes

- providing consistency and stability
- listening to the childrens' voice
- promoting physical and mental health and well-being
- provide a safe and secure environment
- reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals and outside agencies
- encourage carers to be involved in education.

Definitions

A Looked After Child (LAC)

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with the parents (section 20) Children who are the subject of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child (section 44)

For the purpose of school admissions, a looked-after child is a child who is:

(a) in the care of an English local authority, or
(b) being provided with accommodation by such a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

A Previously Looked After Child (PLAC)

Children previously looked after in England and Wales but who left care through:

- an Adoption Order (AO)
- a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- a Child Arrangements Order (CAO)

Previously looked after children may also have been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

The children must still be subject to above orders. A PLAC remains vulnerable and staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep PLAC safe.

Roles & Responsibilities

The board of trustees and academy committee governors are committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will therefore:

- Give high priority consideration to looked after children in the trust academy's oversubscription criteria - in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006 and the School Admissions Code, which require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to LAC in their oversubscription criteria
- Ensure a designated teacher for looked after children is appointed and that they have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe, are enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below and given appropriate training to enable them to carry out this function
- Ensure a personal education plan (PEP) is put in place, implemented and reviewed termly (3 times a year) for every looked after child
- Identify a member of the executive team as a lead for looked after children, and give appropriate training to enable them to carry out this function
- Academy committees receive an annual report from the Headteacher which will summarise the school's work and support for LAC and PLAC. This report will not identify individual children by name.

The central education team will monitor the implementation of this policy in the trust schools on behalf of trustees.

Headteacher

The headteacher will:

- Ensure that the needs of looked after children and previously looked after are given appropriate priority
- Ensure that the programme put in place by the designated teacher raises awareness and challenges negative stereotypes about LAC
- Along with the leadership team, give appropriate support to the designated teacher
- Ensure the designated teacher has the necessary information they need:
    - In relation to the child's looked after legal status
    - Contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility
    - Information about the child's care arrangements
    - Levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
    - Details of the social worker
    - Name of the relevant Virtual School Head (VSH).

Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The Children and Young Persons Act (2008) requires schools to appoint a designated teacher for looked after children. Amendments made in 2017 gave similar duties to academies. The DfE updated the guidance in this role in February 2018. The designated teacher should be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

The most effective Designated Teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This involves, working with VSHs to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

Designated Teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:

- Have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress
- 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 behavior
- Understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 looked-after or previously looked-after status
- Appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's personal education plan 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, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the personal education plan fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child
- For previously looked-after children, 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.

Designated Teachers are also likely to have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by:

- Contributing to the development and review of whole academy policies and procedures to ensure that they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage
- Ensuring there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting in the schoool, new to the school and new to care
- Ensuring there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning; particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the academy and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve
- Ensuring that transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion
- reminding parents and guardians of previously looked-after children when enrolling their child at the school that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to apply for pupil premium+ funding
- Working with the VSH to ensure the most effective use of PP+
- Ensuring there are no barriers to looked-after children 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 looked-after children to attend meetings);
- Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning

- Prioritiising LAC and PLAC in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and ensure that they have access to academic focused study support; are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
- Believing they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.

Being a source of advice for teachers about:

- Adaptive teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked after or previously looked-after children
- The use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked after children 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.

Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:

- Promote good home-school links
- Support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers parents or guardians
- Ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home
- Ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and maths
- Encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment
- Having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked after children's personal education plan (PEP) within school in partnership with others as necessary
- Working closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.

Teachers

Teachers will:

- Have high expectations in regard to the achievement of LAC & PLAC.
- Ensure that the individual needs of LAC & PLAC are met through quality first teaching.
- Have awareness of the specific needs of LAC & PLAC in relation to Attachment and Trauma and make appropriate adjustments to teaching and classroom management to meet these needs.
- Work proactively with the Designated Teacher to ensure that LAC & PLAC meet their targets and achieve. Ensuring that any barriers to learning, and inclusion are highlighted at the earliest opportunity.
- Work to ensure the Inclusion of LAC & PLAC within the School community.
- Ensure any SEND concerns are shared with the SENCO and advise acted on.

The Virtual School Head (VSH)

LAC and PLAC start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, sometimes, have special educational needs. VSHs have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential, an important part of why this role is statutory. For LAC, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH needs to be the educational advocate that parents are for others.

Provision

- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'looked after' has a major impact on children's lives and due consideration must be given to each child
- Staff will ensure that educational recommendations in the PEP will be followed in order that any looked after child will have the opportunity to achieve his/her targets
- The school will liaise with relevant agencies, as appropriate, so that each child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential
- There will be a proactive approach in cooperating with and supporting the local authority with regard to the education of looked after children attending the academy
- We will encourage each looked after child to access out of school hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning
- Pastoral support will be provided for each looked after child, ensuring he/she knows who they can talk to so any issues or concerns are listened to and dealt with
- Staff will be aware of the PEP in order for progress to be made and education targets will include:
  - a record of planned actions
  - information on how progress will be monitored
  - details of interventions, targets and targeted support.

Pupil Premium Plus

For each academic year, pupil premium plus funding is in place for each looked after child. This is administered by Swindon Borough Council Virtual School Headteacher and is issued against agreed / approved aspects of the personal education plan (PEP).

The Pupil Premium Plus will be provided to meet the needs identified in a high-quality plan in the PEP with clear quantitative and/or qualitative targets for improvement, underpinned by well-targeted support. The Pupil Premium Plus should be used to improve outcomes for children in:

- Academic achievement and progress
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented
- Attendance
- Inclusion [including reducing suspensions and exclusions)
- Social skills and emotional aspects related to learning
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider
- Mental health (including overcoming the effects of attachment and developmental trauma) where this affects learning
- Out-of-hour activities that support any of the above.

Pupil premium plus funding is also allocated to school's for PLAC. This funding is not assigned to a PEP.

Sources of Further Information

Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK

Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities - GOV.UK

Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK

Appendix 1

Report to Governors on Looked After Children (LAC) and previously LAC

[Insert school name]

Delete and replace with school log

Date completed:	
This report is for the period: to:	
Date presented to the academy committee:	
Author:	Role in school: e.g. designated teacher for LAC and previously LAC
Signature:	

If there are currently no looked-after or previously looked-after children on the school roll, sign and date below.

In these circumstances, **do not complete the rest of the report**. Only attach this page to the minutes of the meeting of the academy committee.

I confirm that there are currently no looked-after or previously looked-after children on our school roll.

Name:

Signed:

Role in school:

Date:

Specialist LAC / previously LAC training

training attended by	DATE OF TRAINING	COURSE ATTENDED

Training on LAC / previously LAC provided by designated teacher to colleagues

ROLE IN SCHOOL	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	DATE OF TRAINING	Focus of training

Policies and procedures for LAC / previously LAC

	DATE OF LAST REVIEW	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	DETAILS OF POLICY UPDATES
Policy on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children			

Number of LAC and previously LAC

Number of pupils on school role as at [date of report]	LAC:	Previously LAC:
Number of pupils who have Swindon Borough Council as their corporate parent		
Number of pupils who have a different local authority as their corporate parent	Include the name of the local authorities and how many pupils are looked after by each authority	

Personal education plans (PEPs) for looked-after children

Number of PEPs in place	
Name and role of person responsible for PEP reviews	

Progress of LAC and previously LAC

Record the number of LAC and previously LAC who are making expected progress in the core subjects

	TOTAL NUMBER IN KEY STAGE	NUMBER MAKING expected PROGRESS IN ENGLISH	NUMBER MAKING expected PROGRESS IN MATHS	NUMBER MAKING expected PROGRESS IN SCIENCE
Key Stage 1				
Key Stage 2				

Include any additional comments

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Number of LAC / previously LAC on the SEN register	
Number of LAC / previously LAC with an education, health and care (EHC) plan	
Number of LAC / previously LAC who previously received SEN support but are no longer on the register	

Include any additional comments

Attendance

	LAC / previously LAC	Whole school
Overall percentage attendance		
Number of pupils who meet the threshold for persistent absence (less than 90% attendance rate)		
Number of pupils receiving fixed-term exclusions		
Number of pupils receiving permanent exclusions		

Include any additional comments

Interventions and support
Total pupil premium funding for LAC / previously LAC:

	Action	Impact
Interventions and support specifically funded by the pupil premium plus for LAC / previously LAC	Add rows as appropriate	
Learning support accessed by LAC / previously LAC		
Wellbeing support accessed by LAC / previously LAC		
Role of pupil voice		
Actions taken to work with carers		
Interventions to support LAC / previously LAC identified as 'gifted and talented' / 'more able'		

Local partnerships
Include the local partners you work with to support LAC / previously LAC, including data sharing practices
Comment on how virtual school staff support LAC / previously LAC and the designated teacher
Include any feedback or testimonials you've received about your support for LAC / previously LAC from local partners, agencies and carers

Evaluation and improvement plan

STRENGTHS

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT	PROPOSED ACTIONS	RESOURCES REQUIRED