Looked After & Previously Looked After Children Policy

Last Reviewed: September 2026

Document Control			
Review period	12 Months	Next review	August 2027
Owner	CEO	Approver	ESICC

This document applies to all schools and operations of the Galileo Multi Academy Trust: www.galileotrust.co.uk

Policy Review Sheet	
Date of changes:	August 2026

Changes to note	**Reason for change** ***e.g. change in legislation***
Attendance - VSH liaison	Change in legislation (KCSIE 2026, in force 1 Sept 2026)
Care Leavers section added (moved from Definitions, given own heading)	Improved clarity/visibility of existing statutory content
New Virtual School Heads section added	Statutory guidance (Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children) not previously reflected in policy

Contents

Definitions 4
Virtual Schools Heads 5
School Commitment 5
Roles and Responsibilities 6
Headteachers 6
Governing Bodies 7
Designated Teachers 7
Staff 8
Mental Health 8
Attendance 9
Voice of the Child 9
Links with other policies 9

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy a child is 'looked after by a local authority' (LAC) if they are in their care by reason of a case order or is being provided with accommodation under section 20 of the 1989 Act for more than 24 hours with the agreement of the parents, or of the child if they are aged 16 or over (section 22(1) and (2) of the 1989 Act) or The Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Looked after children are those:

- who are subject to a care order (interim or full care order)
- voluntarily accommodated by the local authority
- living with foster parents/carers
- living with friends or relatives, through kinship foster care
- living in a residential children's home
- living in residential settings like schools, secure units or semi-independent living accommodation.

A previously looked after child (PLAC) is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements 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 or turns 18 years old. However local authorities are required to support children leaving care at 18 until they are at least 21. This may involve them continuing to live with their foster family.

Local authorities have on-going responsibilities to the children who cease to be looked after and become care leavers. That includes keeping in touch with them, preparing an assessment of their needs and appointing a Personal Advisor who develops a pathway plan with the young person. That plan describes how the local authority will support the care leaver to participate in education or training. Each of our schools Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) will work closely with the Designated Teacher, to ensure they have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver and will liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

A child is in 'state care' outside of England and Wales if they are in care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Galileo Multi Academy Trust schools recognise that 'Looked After Children' and 'Previously Looked After Children' may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse, or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. Our schools are committed to the concept of the corporate parent for looked after children, and from September 2018 previously looked after children to:

- Offer stability, safety, continuity, positive experiences and individual care and attention.
- Develop an attachment aware school and embed strategies to support the impact of trauma on emotional and mental health.
- Enable all children to make good progress in learning.

Our schools will take account of all related statutory guidance. The DSL will ensure that the school have details of the child's social worker and the name of the Virtual School Head (VSH) in the authority that looks after the child.

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed and reviewed with the school, local authority, carers, and other professionals. They should ensure it fully reflects the needs of the child, remains up to date and is effectively implemented. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Care Leavers are children who cease to be looked after and become care leavers. Local Authorities have an ongoing responsibility to these children. That includes keeping in touch with them, preparing an assessment of their needs and appointing a Personal Advisor who develops a pathway plan with the young person. That plan describes how the local authority will support the care leaver to participate in education or training. Each of our schools' Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) will therefore have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver and will work closely with the Designated Teacher to liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

Virtual Schools Heads

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents, and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

The VSH also manages Pupil Premium Plus funding for LAC on behalf of the local authority, based on the authority's most recently published number of looked-after children. The Designated Teacher will work with the VSH to agree how this funding can best support each child's progress, in line with the needs identified in their PEP.

The Designated Teacher will also work with the VSH to promote the educational achievement of PLAC pupils.

For pupils who left care through adoption, special guardianship, or a child arrangements order, or who were adopted from state care outside England or Wales, the VSH's role is primarily to provide information and advice to the school and other relevant parties, rather than the fuller support role held for LAC.

Beyond these statutory duties, the VSH also holds a non-statutory strategic oversight role for the attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker, and, since September 2024, of children in kinship care. This includes working with the local authority to set and report on ambitious attendance targets. Our schools' approach to liaising with the VSH on attendance concerns is set out in the Attendance section below.

School Commitment

Galileo Multi Academy Trust schools recognise that LAC and PLAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting and are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. As a Trust, we are aware that LAC and PLAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances.

All schools are committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of LAC and PLAC in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.

- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children and Previously Looked After Children.
- All LAC and PLAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy is based on the Department for Educations' statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children and takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.

Our Designated Teachers (DT) take the lead responsibility and are committed to championing the needs and promoting the educational achievement of LAC/PLAC at each of our schools, so that it is in-line with their peers.

There is a Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC and nominated school governor in each of our schools.

School	Designated Teacher & Nominated Governor	Contact
Coatham Primary School	Philip Maudsley Jason Greenwood	01642 486291
Galley Hill Primary School	Mrs Kay Coverdale Mrs Louise Ritchie	01287 635540
Green Gates Primary School	Rachel Fellows Hilary Love	01642 485463
Ings Farm Primary School	Tim Bethell Dennis Ley	01642 485369
John E Batty Primary School	Julie Craggs Lesley Webster	01642 483697
Lakes Primary School	Helen Ede Deb Fenny – Vice Chair	01642 485894 safeguarding@LakesPrimary.co.uk
New Marske Primary School	John Dooris (Headteacher) Philippa Cook (Chair of Governors)	01642 486392
St Peter's CE Primary School	Sue Hunt Lynne Richards	01287 676210
Westgarth Primary School	Rachael Smith Ellen Bissell	01642 485560
Wheatlands Primary School	Samantha Pyle David Wimble	01642 489784

Headteachers

- Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.

- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance, and any exclusions of LAC and PLAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC and PLAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- All staff are aware of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups and their propensity towards being both the victims and perpetrator of Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse.
- The exclusion of LAC & PLAC is avoided, alternatives to exclusion are considered and additional support is put in place to support those children at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used, to good effect, for the benefit of all disadvantaged students and for the whole student body. This funding should not be assigned to individual students, but a cumulative amount to improve learning experiences and progress.

Governing Bodies

- Ensure there is a nominated governor who is fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC ensuring it is scrutinised ensuring that is used appropriately and effectively.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher ais appropriately trained and have the relevant qualifications and experience to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher, and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC and PLAC are recognised and met.
- All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC/PLAC.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
    - The number of LAC and PLAC students on the school's roll (if any).
    - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
    - Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
    - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
    - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
    - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

Designated Teachers

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for LAC and PLAC assessing services and support and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them." It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Designated Teacher within school will:

- Promote the educational achievement of every LAC/PLAC child on roll by working with the VSH and promoting a whole school culture, through access to training and keeping up to date with research and good practice.
- Be a central point of initial contact within the school.
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the PEP to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensure that a PEP is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer, and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.

- Ensure PEPs work in harmony with any EHC plan to, coherently and comprehensively, set out how their needs are being met.
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed. It is vital that the Designated Teacher is aware that LAC/PLAC children are significantly more likely to have SEN than their peers. Of those with SEN a significant proportion will have EHCPs.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the LAC and PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Work closely with the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Act as an advisor to staff, Governors, Trustees, raising their awareness of the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school –to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Work directly with LAC/PLAC carers, parents, and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations.

Staff

All staff within our schools will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all students.
- Maintain LAC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Are aware of the prevalence of LAC & PLAC mental health needs, and flag concerns to the DT and Mental Health Lead.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the school's Behaviour policy.

Mental Health

Looked-after and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional, and mental health issues than their peers. This can impact on their behaviour and education.

Designated Teachers are not expected to be mental health experts; however, they have an important role in ensuring they and other staff can identify signs and potential issues and know where the school can draw on specialist services, including the SENCO, Mental Health Champion, and their local authority support team. It is important to have a means of regularly measuring the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Attendance

The attendance of LAC and PLAC is carefully monitored and reported daily to the Headteacher/Designated Teacher. 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. Where an LAC or PLAC pupil's absence may be linked to their care arrangements, family circumstances, or wider safeguarding needs, the Designated Teacher and DSL will liaise directly with the Virtual School Head (VSH), reflecting the KCSIE 2026 requirement for Virtual School Heads to work with local authorities on ambitious attendance targets for children with a social worker.

Voice of the Child

Listening to the voice of LAC and PLAC is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs.

For children in care, having a good relationship with their Designated Teacher is one of the most important factors in supporting them in school.

The Designated Teacher should:

- Be available and take time to get to know the child.
- Notice when the child is upset or angry and be available when the need help.
- Understand that although the child has had a different past, from their peers, it doesn't mean they need to be treated differently.
- Understand the child's individual experience of being looked-after.
- Understand that the child's past will affect their present and future behaviour even if they are not aware of it.

Links with other policies

- Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Exclusions
- SEN(D)
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Attendance Policy
- Equality and Diversity
- Admissions Policy
- Mental Health and Well Being Policy
- Pupil Premium Funding Policy