



# **Looked After Children (LAC)/Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy**

**September 2021**

Date of Next Review – September 2022

**Responsibility for Review: Director of Care, Guidance and Support**  
**Date of Last Review: September 2021**

## 1.0 Policy statement

Apollo Partnership Trust is fully committed to supporting Children who are Looked After or have previously been a Looked After Child. Department for Education guidance makes it clear that all schools have a statutory duty to ensure that students who fall into the categories above are well supported to ensure they achieve their potential at school, Apollo schools take this guidance seriously.

## 2.0 Scope and purpose

- Identify a designated teacher in all academies to support a child who is looked after or previously looked after.
- Ensure that academies are clear on their responsibilities and take these seriously.
- Recognise the importance of staff training on the barriers a child who is looked after may face and how to support them with these barriers.
- Highlight the need for multi-agency work around the most vulnerable.
- Provide families with information on the duties and responsibilities of academies for a child who is looked after.

The policy is underpinned by and compliant with:

- Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After children
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010
- Section 20 of the 2008 Act

## 3.0 Definitions

**3.1** Looked After Children (LAC) are students that in the care of a local authority and/or provided with accommodation by a local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

**3.2** Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are registered students that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:
  - a child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
  - a special guardianship order
  - an adoption order

**3.3** Personal Education Plan (PEP) is part of a Looked After Child's care plan that is developed with the school and the child's Social Worker. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child is the best they can be.

**3.4** 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 students as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools and carers.

## 4.0 Barriers for a Child who is Looked After

**4.1** Attainment data for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to their peers.

**4.2** Students may have suffered disrupted learning or missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning and needs to involve a multi-agency approach.

## 5.0 Role of the local governing body

The Local Governing Body of each school will ensure that a designated qualified teacher will oversee the education and support for LAC and PLAC. The local governing body will ensure the designated teacher has appropriate seniority and professional experience and training to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advise others to ensure the needs of the students are catered for.

## 6.0 Role of the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC

The students' carer (or residential care worker), social worker or, for Previously Looked After Children parents or guardian, will have day-to-day responsibilities for the child. Within the local authority, the VSH will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the school.

The designated teacher is the central point of contact within the school LAC and PLAC. They will ensure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a student's learning. Designated teachers in academies will:

- work with VSH and external agencies where needed to ensure students' needs are met through contributing to, monitoring and reviewing the PEP within statutory timescales
- identify best use of funding attached to the student, including Pupil Premium Plus funding.
- ensure that school staff understand the things which can affect how a LAC learns and achieves and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students
- promote a culture in which a LAC is 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
- prioritise students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and any other academic support
- encourage participation in school activities and in decision making within the school
- liaise with curriculum staff to ensure that LAC is a priority for interventions and tailored lessons
- ensure that there are positive and productive relationships with home which foster the development of the student
- work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and effectively responded to
- fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, including any requests to the Virtual School Head for advice on meeting their individual needs

## 7.0 Roles and responsibilities of all staff

Staff in each school will work hard to ensure that a LAC is well supported by:

- having equally high expectations of all students but providing appropriate scaffolds and supports
- being aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and understand 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
- understanding how important it is to see the student as an individual rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their background

*September 2021*