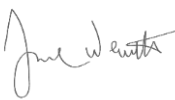




Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children Policy

Including the role of the Trust Virtual Head and the Designated Teacher

Document Control

Description	By Whom	Date
Established	JG & DB	March 2021
Latest Review		
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Introduction

The Trustees and all staff of The Harmony Trust are committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This trust recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of looked after children when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in “Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children” (Feb 2018) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

As a result of this national and historical underachievement, The Harmony Trust champions the needs of Looked After & Previously Looked After Children; raises awareness and challenges negative stereotypes; provides additional support as needed, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible in all areas of learning and development.

Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children,
- To fulfil our academies’ role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children/Post Looked After Children,

- To support our looked after children and post-looked after children, give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school activities,
- To use funding provided to address all social, emotional and learning needs of our LAC/PLAC including addressing any gaps in learning as required,
- To ensure that academy policies and procedures are followed for LAC /PLAC as for all children,
- To work with the Virtual Schools to identify aspects of support available for LAC/PLAC and their carers and parents,
- To ensure that carers and social workers of LAC/PLAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.

Definitions

Looked After Children

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

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' [LAC]. They may be looked after by one local authority but living in a different authority.

LAC reviews, involving the academy, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for LAC until they are 16 years old.

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils 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 [CAO], which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
- A special guardianship order [SGO]
- An adoption order [AO]
- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

Personal Education Plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the academy, social worker, carers and other relevant professionals. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential. All PEPs are reviewed regularly according to the home local authority timescales.

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.

Roles and Responsibilities

(see Appendix A)

Harmony Trust Virtual Head

- The Harmony Trust Virtual Head (Debbie Beeston) takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement and well-being of looked-after and previously looked-after children within our trust.
- Is the initial point of contact for any trust wide matters relating to LAC/PLAC.
- Contribute to the development and review of the academy and Trust policies to ensure the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are considered within all trust policies
- Promote a whole trust culture where the needs of these LAC/PLAC are prioritised
- Liaise with all Designated Teachers for LAC/PLAC in our academies
- Provide Trustees with information regarding the attainment, progress and well-being of all LAC/PLAC in all our academies

Designated Teacher

- Act as a central point of initial contact within individual academies for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
 - Working with the Trust LAC/PLAC Virtual Head & Virtual School Headteachers in their own local authority
 - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Contribute to the development and review of school and trust policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations.
- Liaise with the child's social worker and other relevant agencies in order to meet the child's needs and support their progress and development
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs*
- 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
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion the designated teacher will :
 - Contact the Trust Virtual Head & Local Authority Virtual School Head (VSH) as soon as possible so they can help the academy decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
 - Working with the VSH and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour

- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the Trust Headteacher & VSH on avoiding exclusion.

* Personal Education Plan (PEP) Completion

1. Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after child entering the school)
2. Date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
3. A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data PEP. A meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker, designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
4. A date is set for the next PEP meeting and the Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.
5. PEP submitted by Social Worker to the LAC team (see Appendix B)

Trustees

- To monitor the implementation of the policy
- To review information provided by the Trust Virtual Head for LAC/PLAC
- To ensure adequate resources and training have been allocated to ensure this policy is successfully implemented

Supporting LAC/ PLAC in Our Academies

Looked After Children and Post Looked After Children may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- Low self-esteem,
- Poor education standards due to time out of school or well-being issues which impact on learning potential and learning retention,
- Delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development,
- Be bullied or bully others historically or currently,
- Be prone to mental health issues,
- Be isolated with few friends,
- Have behaviour issues,
- Poor attachments to other,
- Have a need to be very private.

This potentially makes LAC/PLAC children an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. The Harmony Trust is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- A Trust Virtual Head (Debbie Beeston),
- A Designated Teacher in each academy,
- Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children,
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children,
- Effective strategies that support the child's emotional well-being and social and emotional development. For example; play therapy, art therapy, life stories.
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group, including 'catch-up programmes' and 'recovery curriculum'.

Our Trust's approach to supporting the educational achievement of LAC/PLAC is based on the following principles:

- ✓ Prioritising education
- ✓ Promoting attendance
- ✓ Targeting support
- ✓ Having high expectations and raising aspiration
- ✓ Promoting inclusion
- ✓ Achieving stability and continuity
- ✓ Early intervention and priority action
- ✓ Listening to children - the child's voice is paramount
- ✓ Liaising with child advocates where relevant and required
- ✓ Promoting health and well-being, including mental health
- ✓ Minimising exclusions and promoting stability
- ✓ Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

Recording and Monitoring

Records of all categories of LAC/PLAC children are maintained at academy, hub and trust level. These records include numbers in each category of LAC/PLAC, attainment and progress rates, behaviour issues and any exclusions, attendance and general well-being.

The Trust Virtual Headteacher for LAC/PLAC collates this information each term to facilitate a termly report to trustees and CEO.

Training

This policy will be shared with relevant staff as part of academy CPD sessions. Additional training is provided/ accessed where it is required, in order to support and promote achievement and particular needs for our Looked After/ Post Looked After children. This may include an awareness of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences or trauma, for example. This training can be accessed via the Virtual Schools in the academies' local authority.

All of our Designated Teachers must complete training about the role of the designated teacher. This is accessible via the Virtual Schools and is an online module. It is also accessible via the 'National Online Safety' website.

Designated Teachers should attend/ access Local Authority training provided by the Virtual Schools to support them in their role.

There are Trust termly network meetings led by the Trust Virtual Head (Debbie Beeston) in order to further support Designated Teachers in our academies.

Links to Other Policies

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that trustees and staff have regard to the needs of Looked After Children/Post Looked After Children when reviewing them:

- Admissions Policy including oversubscription criteria
- Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy, including local management of behaviour arrangements
- Exclusions policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

For more information please see:

- The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children – Statutory guidance for school governing bodies <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>
- Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people based on their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 and it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote and encourage equality in our academies.

Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy.

All data will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

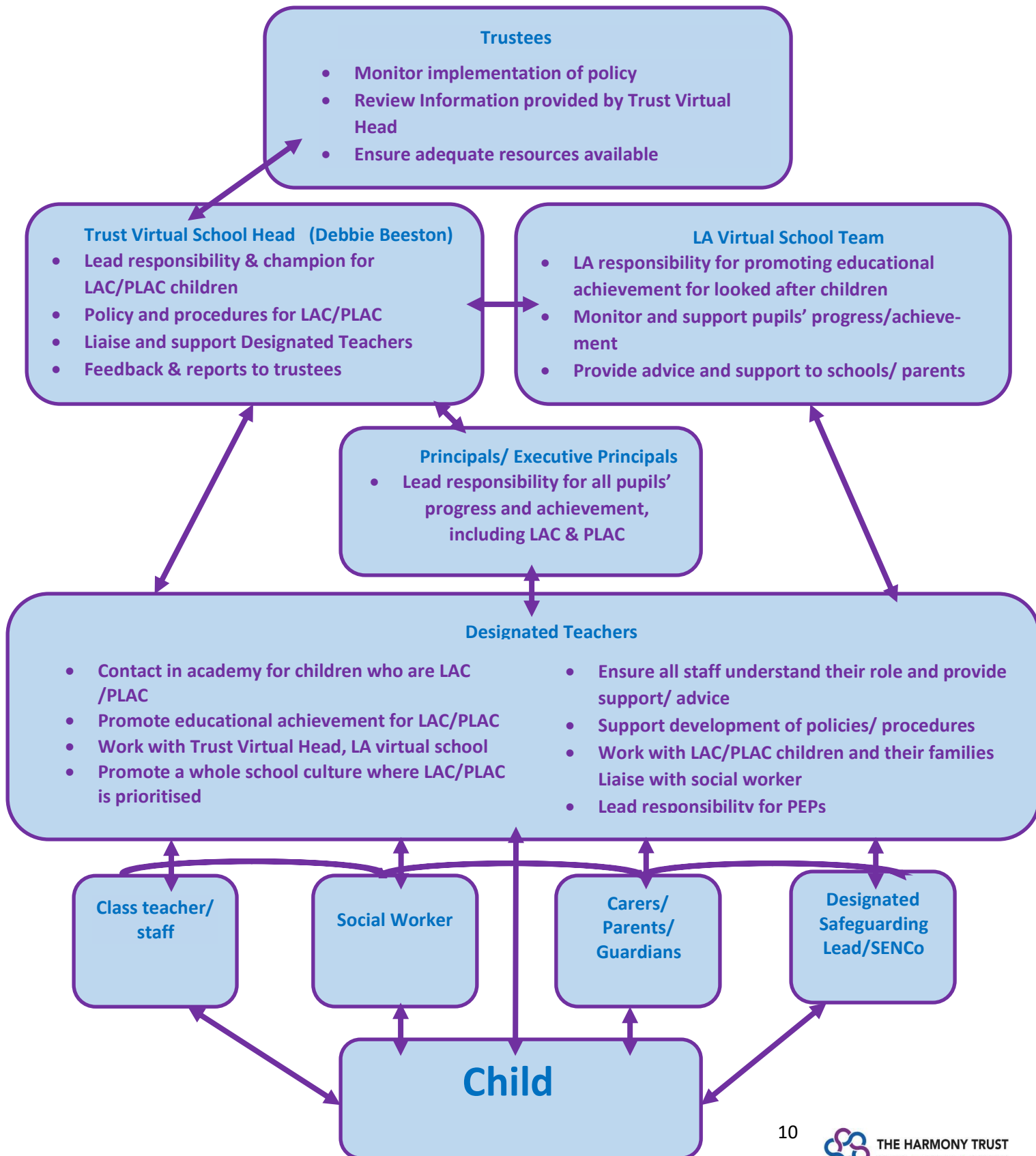
Data Audit For This Policy					
What?	Probable Content	Why?	Who?	Where?	When?
LAC / PLAC policy	Any personal information including personal sensitive information	Required to be retained as part of education , statutory process	Principal / SLT, Trust central team, Virtual Head, staff or other representative as required as part of the relevant process	Kept on file at academy (and Trust central where appropriate).	Held on file following relevant retention periods (dependent on nature of personal information)

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements
		✓

Appendix A:

Flowchart of responsibilities for looked after and post looked after children



Appendix B

Virtual School Teams

Oldham

Oldham Virtual School, Oldham Council, Metropolitan Place, Hobson Street,
Oldham, OL1 1TT Tel: 0161 770 6590

Name	Role	Contact Details
Jennie Davies	Head of Virtual School	jennie.davies@oldham.gov.uk
Sarah Reddy	Team Manager	sarah.reddy@oldham.gov.uk
Nicola Wood	Post 16 Education Support Officer	nicola.wood@oldham.gov.uk
Debbie Edwards	KS4 Education Support Officer	debbie.edwards@oldham.gov.uk
Rachel Kenealy	KS3 Education Support Officer	rachel.kenealy@oldham.gov.uk
Jane Butterworth	Primary	jane.butterworth@oldham.gov.uk
Michaela Blair	PEP Co-ordinator	michaela.blair@oldham.gov.uk
Rebecca Clegg	PEP Officer	rebecca.clegg@oldham.gov.uk
Gary Graham	Engagement Officer	gary.graham@oldham.gov.uk
Paula Clarke	SALT Specialist	paula.clarke@oldham.gov.uk

Tameside

Tameside Virtual School, Hyde Town Hall, Market Street, Hyde, Tameside, SK14 1AL

Tel: 0161 342 4057 E mail: admin.virtualschool@tameside.gov.uk

www.tameside.gov.uk/tamesidevirtualschool

Name	Role	Contact Details
Amanda Aylward	Head of Virtual School	amanda.aylward@tameside.gov.uk
Rosie Spiers	Team Member for Nursery and Primary Schools	rosie.spiers@tameside.gov.uk
Sarah Hall	Team Member for Secondary and Special schools	sarah.hall@tameside.gov.uk
Sally Courtney	Team Member for Post 16	sally.courtney@tameside.gov.uk

Derby

Virtual School for Looked After Children, People Services Directorate, Floor 1, The Council House, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FS Telephone 01332 641439

Website: www.derby.gov.uk/education-and-learning/derby-virtual-school/

Name	Role	Contact Details
Graeme Ferguson	Head of Virtual School	graeme.ferguson@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 640362
Kate Harm	Specialist Education Officer for Children in Care	kate.harm@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 641439
Catherine Ward	Specialist Education Officer for Children in Care	catherine.ward@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 640346
Nina McNellis	Specialist Education Officer for Children in Care	nina.mcnellis@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 956459
Sarah Parkman	Specialist Education Officer for Children in Care	sarah.parkman@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 640347
Susannah Beadle	Specialist Education Officer for Children in Care	susannah.beadle@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 642385
Liz Williams	Project Support Administrator	elizabeth.williams@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 640342
Ruby Turkington	Virtual School Apprentice	ruby.turkington@derby.gov.uk Tel: 01332 647840