

LIPA
SIXTH FORM
COLLEGE

Looked After Children Policy

Approved by: LGB **Date:** September 2023

Last edited: August 2023

Next review due by: September 2024

Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children Policy 2023/24

1. Purpose of this policy

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Looked After Children (LAC) and previously LAC are of real concern. Students who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation. LIPA Sixth Form College endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our students.

With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage students to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social, and emotional development.
- Ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for care experienced and previously care experienced children realistically and use the college's resources efficiently to ensure the college meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of college life. Help students develop their cultural, moral, and social understanding.

This policy relates specifically to learners who are looked after children (LAC) also known as Child Looked After (CLA), care leavers (CL) and young carers (YC). As partners we endeavour to ensure that Young People in Care and Care Leavers achieve the best possible outcomes in post-16 education.

LIPA Sixth Form College will ensure 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 other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers, and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

2. Definitions

Looked-after children are registered students that are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- Looked-after children will be referred to hereafter as Children who are Looked After, or LAC.

Looked-after children are registered students that fall into any 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

Personal Education Plan (PEP) - The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is part of a LAC's care plan that is developed with the college. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

The Virtual School Head (VSH) - this is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools and colleges 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, colleges, parents, and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

Parents - This can include natural parents, adoptive parents, or foster parents.

Guardians - This is a person or persons with parental responsibility, and may make decisions about the child's care and upbringing.

3. Policy

Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is: Amy Deane, who is our Assistant Principal - Inclusion

You can contact her at 0151 330 32 32 or a.deane@lipasixthformcollege.org

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of LAC and previously looked-after children at our college. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Our link Governor is **Jo Moriarty who can be contacted on j.moriarty@lipa.ac.uk**

In 2023/24 LIPA Sixth Form College works with two Virtual Schools, the contact details of which are:

Liverpool Virtual School: virtual.school@liverpool.gov.uk

Luton Virtual School key contacts are:

Michelle Wright michelle.wright@luton.gov.uk 07834 617 857

Matthew Sims matthew.sims@luton.gov.uk 01582 548113

4. Role of the designated teacher

Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher, with support from the LAC Officer will:

-act as a central point of initial contact within the college for any matters involving LAC and previously looked-after children

-promote the educational achievement of every LAC and previously looked-after child on roll by:

- Working with VSHs
- Promoting a whole-college culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring those in college understand:
 - The barriers which can affect how LAC and previously looked-after children learn and achieve.
 - How the whole college supports the educational achievement of these students.
 - Contribute to the development and review of whole-college policies to ensure they consider the needs of LAC and previously looked-after children
 - Promote a culture in which LAC and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other college activities
 - Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with LAC and previously looked-after children
 - Work directly with LAC and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents, and guardians to promote good home-college links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
 - Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of PEPs for LAC.
 - Ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding LAC 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.

Supporting LAC

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure the PEPs for LACs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs.
- Monitor and track how LAC's attainment progresses under their PEPs.
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP.
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place.
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the college and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for students.
- Ensure that:

- PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced.
- Where, applicable, transfer a child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

- Ensure the specific needs of LAC and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the college uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for LAC can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about support for these young people.
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked after children.
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries about its use.
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of LAC and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour, and future career planning.
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of LAC and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this.
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to LAC, is followed.
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a child may have.
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in LAC and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in LAC and previously looked-after children and understand where the college can draw on specialist services.
- Assess wellbeing and use this information to inform PEPs.
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that all LAC's have access to a key person.

Relationships beyond the college

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the college to respond effectively to the needs of LAC and previously looked-after children.
- Discuss with social workers how the college should engage with birth parents, and ensure the college is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom.
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education.
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN, where needed.
- Consider how the college works with others outside of the college to maximise the stability of education for LAC, such as:
 - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
 - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when LAC are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action.
 - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption.
 - Making sure that, if a child in care moves to a different setting, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process.
 - Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians

Make sure that for each LAC:

- There is an agreed process for how the college works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, to review and develop educational progress.
- College policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents.
- Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips.

Where a child in care is at risk of exclusion:

- Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the college decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
- Work with the VSH and child's carers to 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 VSH on avoiding exclusion.

There is also support with transition between colleges in the admissions code whereby looked after and previously looked after children have priority (criteria 1) when moving phases in education.

Monitoring and Support arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Amy Deane and reviewed by the governing board.

LIPA Sixth Form College prides itself on being a truly inclusive college. Our standards demand that we do everything we can to include and encourage ALL students with a focus on LAC students.

The key methods of supporting students who are LAC or previously looked after are as follows:

- Regular PEP meetings (termly)
- Day-to-day monitoring, mentoring and regular check-ins with staff.
- Identification of a key person
- Provision of learning support, usually by the key LSA linked to the student's department.
- Contribute to the annual LAC Review meetings overseen by the IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer)
- Contribute to regular transitional or care planning meetings as requested
- Provision of IT equipment
- Bus passes funded by college bursary
- Payment of trips and visits to provide opportunities for socialisation and building attachments with peers.
- Opportunities to use the LRC to complete coursework
- Use of the pantry for breakfasts, snacks and food to take away to prepare food off-site.
- In-house counselling
- Check-ins with Designated Teacher /Assistant SENDCO / DSLs in Safeguarding & Inclusion Office
- Reasonable adjustments
- Working with the Virtual School

Links to other policies

Behaviour

Code of Conduct

Child protection and safeguarding

SEND

Supporting pupils with medical needs