



Offwell C of E Primary School

Policy for the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

(Including children under Special Guardianship Orders)

At Offwell C of E Primary School we believe that all Looked After Children (LAC), and those previously in care, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Devon children. As a community we aim to be champions for Looked After Children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development. To do this we commit to:

- Supporting them to raise their aspirations;
- Giving them a sense of the control they have over their own lives;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

Definition

Definition: Who are our Looked After and Previously Looked After Children?

Most Looked After Children will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative, or even be placed back at home with their parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is in the Care of the Local Authority if he or she is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Authority. This includes:

- (a) Children accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (b) Children who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order;
- (c) Children who are the subject of Emergency Orders for their protection.

Previously Looked After Children include those who were looked after by the local authority but ceased to be as a result of an adoption order, a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), or a child arrangements order. These children may still face many of the same challenges and vulnerabilities and should receive similar levels of support.

Legal Framework

From 1 September 2009 all Governing Bodies were required under the Children and Young Persons Act of 2008 to appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children.

The Children and Families Act 2014 also required all Local Authorities to appoint a Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that the educational achievement of Looked After Children was a priority and that arrangements were in place to improve outcomes.

Previous legislation and guidance from the DCSF, DfE, and DH requires schools to have effective policies for supporting the education of Looked After Children.

Objectives

At Offwell C of E Primary School, to ensure support for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children we will:

- Create a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their responsibility in supporting the role of Corporate Parent;
- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
- Bring the educational attainment of our Looked After Children in line with those of their peers;
- Ensure access to a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to age and ability;
- Balance high levels of support with challenge and high expectation;
- Have a Designated Teacher (DT) to act as advocate and coordinator of support, liaising with carers, parents (as appropriate), and Social Workers;
- Ensure each child has a current, high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP);
- Use Pupil Premium Plus funding to provide personalised support as identified in the PEP;
- Monitor attendance and progress closely, sharing information with the Virtual School;
- Plan for future transitions and avoid unnecessary changes in school placement.

Whole School Commitment

At Offwell C of E Primary School, all staff and governors are committed to improving educational life chances for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (including those under SGOs). We ensure that:

- Staff responsible for these pupils are given appropriate time and support to carry out their roles effectively.
- Clear reporting and monitoring procedures are in place internally and with external agencies.
- Discretion and sensitivity are maintained around children's care status.

We will:

- Challenge stereotypes and low expectations.
- Monitor the academic and social progress of all LAC/PLAC.
- Follow strict protocols when sharing sensitive information.

Admissions and Transitions

We will:

- Prioritise the admission of LAC and PLAC (including children subject to an SGO).
- Ensure all such pupils meet the Designated Teacher promptly after admission.
- Provide a warm, well-planned welcome and induction process.
- Liaise with the Area Learning Advocate and Virtual School to ensure full information is gathered quickly.
- Support continuity of educational experience by timely sharing of information with receiving schools.

Attendance

We will:

- Implement first-day absence procedures for all LAC/PLAC whose attendance falls below 95%;
- Notify carers, social workers, and the Education Welfare Officer of concerns.
- Celebrate excellent attendance and support improvement where needed.
- Include children under SGOs in these processes as they often require similar levels of support.

Exclusion

We will:

- Follow the DCC Protocol to avoid exclusions of LAC wherever possible.
 - Explore all avenues of support and personalised intervention before considering exclusion.
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Multi-Agency Liaison

We will:

- Ensure the voice of the child is central to planning and decision making.
- Liaise effectively with carers, social workers, and — where appropriate — parents or Special Guardians.
- Ensure all staff understand their roles in working with external professionals.
- Promote participation in enrichment and out-of-hours learning.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

We will:

- Hold PEP meetings aligned with care reviews, involving relevant professionals and the child's views.
- Ensure PEPs are completed within 20 days of enrolment and reviewed termly.
- Set SMART targets within PEPs linked to the Care Plan, EHCP, or other relevant plans.
- Ensure Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) and Personal Education Allowance (PEA) are used strategically to support progress.
- Nominate pupils for Celebration of Achievement events where appropriate.

School Trips and Enrichment

We will:

- Promote access to trips and extracurricular opportunities for LAC and PLAC.
- Identify early who holds authority to grant permissions — typically the Social Worker for LAC, and parents/adopters/SGO holders for PLAC.
- Work to eliminate financial or logistical barriers to participation.

Complaints

Any complaint concerning this policy or its implementation should be directed to the Designated Teacher in the first instance. Where unresolved, complaints should follow the school's published Complaints Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors will:

- Appoint and support a trained Designated Teacher.
- Nominate a Governor for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

- Monitor attainment, progress, attendance, exclusions, and the use of PP+.
- Support the school's statutory responsibilities, including for children under SGOs.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure the DT is trained and enabled to carry out their duties.
- Allocate Key Workers for LAC where possible.
- Monitor policy implementation and outcomes.
- Report to Governors and the Virtual School regularly.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be a qualified teacher with appropriate experience and training.
- Maintain up-to-date records of all LAC/PLAC, including legal status and contact permissions.
- Oversee high-quality PEPs and ensure targets are implemented.
- Promote high aspirations, ensure inclusion in interventions, and advise colleagues on differentiation.
- Monitor and report on outcomes to the Virtual School and SLT.
- Act as the key link with the Virtual School and external professionals.
- Ensure support and preparation for key transitions.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is shared only as appropriate.

All Staff will:

- Be trained to understand the barriers faced by LAC/PLAC.
- Respond with empathy, high expectations, and inclusive practice.
- Respect confidentiality and respond sensitively to a child's care status.

Special Educational Needs

We will:

- Identify and assess needs early, ensuring access to appropriate provision.
- Align annual EHCP reviews with care reviews where possible.
- Provide challenge and enrichment for able pupils, regardless of care status.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Progress of LAC and PLAC (including children under SGOs) will be reviewed termly and reported to the Governing Body.

The Headteacher and/or Designated Teacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on this policy and its implementation.

Date adopted: July 2025_____

Review date: _July 2028_____