



St Matthew's Primary School

Looked After Child (LAC), Previously Looked After Child (PLAC) & Children with a Social Worker Policy

Date Policy Written: May 2026

Review Cycle: Annual basis or sooner if required.

Ratified by Governing Board on:

Next review date: May 2027

This Policy must be read in conjunction with : Admissions Policy and Arrangements, Anti-Bullying Policy, Attendance and Punctuality Policy, Behaviour Policy, Equality Information and Objectives Policy, Pupil Premium Report, SEND Policy and SEND Information Report

Aims

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children (LAC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), and children who have had a social worker now or historically, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their full potential, both academically and personally.

Introduction

St Matthew's Primary School is committed to providing quality education to all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children. It is recognised nationally that there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared to their peers. Challenges also exist for children who have received support from a Social Worker, either currently or in the past. We are committed to implementing the principles and practice outlined in '[Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children \(DfE 2018\)](#)' and '[The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children](#)' [DfE 2018](#).

To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

At St Matthew's Primary School we work in partnership with Luton Borough Council, and other Local Authorities as Corporate Parents to jointly support the education, safety and wellbeing of Looked After Children (LAC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), and children who have had a social worker.

Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC) are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989 for more than 24 hours.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents or respite care.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Children with a social worker are defined as:

- Children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children in kinship care are defined as:

- Children living in informal arrangements made by their birth parents with a close relative, or by default, for example because their birth parent has died or abandoned them.
- Children looked after by the local authority and placed with kinship foster carers.
- Children living in arrangements which are due to lead to adoption by a relative or friend.
- Children living with testamentary guardians when a parent has died. They may be on a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order granted by the court.

Looked After Child reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. As stated in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Virtual School Heads have a statutory responsibility for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, and a non-statutory responsibility for promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker and children in kinship care. The school works with the Virtual School Head in supporting these children.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis
- The Designated Teacher will discuss information sharing at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

The Looked After Children Designated Teacher, Safeguarding Officer and Senior

Leadership Team will:

- Be advocates for Looked After Children
- Identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place
- Ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
- Ensure transition arrangements between year groups are planned on an individual basis to minimise emotional trauma
- Ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LAC IS VICTORIA RAYNER

The Designated Teacher will *(for children currently in care)*:

- When new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- Ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.

- Encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA

The Designated Teacher will (*for children previously in care, with a social worker or previously with a social worker*):

- When new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status
- Ensure school staff are familiar with which children have been previously in care, in Kinship Care, on a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan (either currently or historically)
- Ensure school staff use a trauma informed, relational approach to support pastorally and academically
- Monitor progress, attainment and attendance, and support early identification of emerging needs
- Encourage children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible
- Support parents and carers to engage with school to enhance learning

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All staff at St Matthew's Primary School will:

- Ensure that any child in public care or who has previously had a social worker is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate
- As with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way

- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and children who have had a social worker
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and children who have had a social worker

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing body of this school will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (anonymous data shared);
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- Support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;
- Nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons). The nominated Governor for LAC is Tina Edwards.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy annually.

TRAINING

The Headteacher or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy and that teachers of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children and children previously with a Social Worker have the professional development and support needed to ensure children succeed at school.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Written by Victoria Rayner

Deputy Headteacher and LAC Designated Teacher May 2026