NORBURY HIGH SCHOOL for GIRLS

Education of Looked After Children Policy

Review date: **Jul 2026**

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Staff resp. for review: **CRO/JCL**



Education of Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Local Area Committee members of Norbury High School for Girls are committed to providing a quality education for all students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Local Area Committee (LAC) members recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children" (May 2000) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Children who are 'looked after' (LAC) may be 'accommodated', 'in care' or 'remanded/detained' as follows…

ACCOMMODATED (Section 20)

This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

IN CARE

A child is in care only if a court has granted a care order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

REMANDED/DETAINED

A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:

- An emergency protection order
- Removed by police using their powers of protection
- A court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.

Looked after children (LAC) or Children in Care (CiC) refers to a child ' looked after by a local authority' as outlined by section 22 *Children Act 1989* or *Part 6 of the Social services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.*

Looked after Children (LAC)/ Children in Care (CiC) are children who are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours and include children who are:

- Living with foster parents
- Living in a residential children's home
- Living in residential settings like schools or secure units.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) refers to children who are

'...no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any persons, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England or Wales.'

Looked after children (LAC), Children in Care (CiC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) may have some or all of the following issues:

- Low self-esteem
- Poor education standards due to time out of school
- Delayed social/emotional/cognitive development
- Be bullied or bully others
- Be prone to mental health issues
- Be isolated with few friends
- Have behaviour issues
- Poor attachments to others

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

Responsibilities

The Local Area Committee members of Norbury High School for Girls are 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 Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- LAC and Family Liaison Officers
- Maintain an up-to-date LAC roster
- Personal education plans (PEPs) for all looked after children including working with Virtual school
- LAC reviews which assess the whole child
- Keeping records of any changes to Care Plans up to date
- Monitor and submit attendance records as required
- Monitor and submit academic school reports as required
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality
- An effective policy that supports the education of this vulnerable group

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

The designated teacher should:

- Line-manage the work of the LAC and Family Liaison Officers in regards to LAC children.
- Be an advocate for looked after children
- 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 PEP is completed as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or of joining a new school); 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 within 28 days, three months and six months and, at least, every six months - a flow chart showing PEP completion can be found at the end of this policy
- 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 Local Area Committee members
- 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) are made aware of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive
- Encourage looked after children to participate in extracurricular 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 returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the relevant local authority

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEP's 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 and LAC and Family Liaison Officer'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 college setting
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked after children
- Positively promote the self-esteem of looked after children

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE (LAC)

The LAC of this school will:

- Ensure all LAC members 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 (no names)
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- Liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her 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 LAC member 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)
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Information on looked after children will be shared with college staff on a 'need-to-know basis'
- The Designated Teacher/LAC and Family Liaison Officers will discuss what information is shared with which school staff 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

TRAINING

The Headteacher, Designated Teacher and Professional Development Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

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). A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data.

3. PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate a date is set for the next PEP meeting.

4. PEP is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life. PEP sent by SW to the LACE team.

** Note: This process is for children who are looked after by Croydon; other authorities may have slightly different procedures on PEP completion as well as a different PEP format.*

- Support for children Looked After by Croydon is provided by the Looked After Children's Team (LACE); they are able to give advice about children looked after by other boroughs in the school

RELATED POLICIES

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with:

- The Behaviour Policy
- The Attendance Policy
- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The SEND Policy

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An equality impact assessment has been carried out with regard to this policy. There was found to be no significant impact on any group with protected characteristics, i.e. this policy does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation.