Special Partnership Trust

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) POLICY

Date Last Reviewed: September 2026

Review Date: September 2028

Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

Context

This policy is underpinned by legislation and statutory guidance including;

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children's and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE 2018 -Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked after children
- DfE 2018 The designated teacher for looked – after and previously looked after children
- DFE 2017 Exclusions from mainstream schools, academies and student referral units in England
- DFE 2024 – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DFE 2018 – Working Together to safeguard children.

This policy operates in conjunction with;

Admissions policy
Behaviour policy
Ant bullying policy
Equal opportunities policy
Safeguarding Policy

Intent

The educational achievements and life opportunities for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are of real concern – therefore pupils who are Looked After require specific focus and additional attention to their support.

Admissions to Special Partnership Schools are made by Cornwall Local Authority – all pupils who attend a Special Partnership Trust school have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The Special Partnership Trust Schools endeavor to provide a high quality, focused offer to all pupils whilst having particular regard to LAC and Previously LAC pupils. Schools ensure that;

- All pupils access high quality teaching, effective targeted support and a curriculum that meets their needs.

- LAC and Previously - LAC access realistically planned support to ensure their specific needs are met and good progress is made. This support is informed by the Education Health Care Plan and review process.
- Pupils of all abilities are supported to be aspirational in their learning
- Pupils learn in a positive, caring and supportive environment – and are fully facilitated to successfully manage any transitions.

Important 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
- 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 AL under an agreement with their parents or respite care.

Previously LAC (PLAC) are defined as;

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England or 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 or Wales from "state care" (care that is provided by a public authority , religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society)

Roles and Responsibilities
The Trustees are responsible for;

- Ensuring the Trust has a policy for LAC and Previously LAC
- Reviewing policy and procedure in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance
- Ensuring they receive feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring effective admission of LAC and Previously LAC – avoiding unnecessary delays.

The Local Governing Body is responsible for;

- Reviewing the Annual report produced by the Designated teacher
- Ensuring they receive feedback on the implementation and effectiveness of the policy each year.

- Ensuring that LAC and Previously LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments have been made.
- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of LAC and Previously LAC

The Headteacher is responsible for;

- Ensuring the school has a clear process for supporting LAC and Previously LAC
- Appointing a Designated Teacher
- Allowing the Designated teacher the time and facilities needed to succeed in carrying out their role.
- Keeping a clear register of LAC and Previously LAC pupils
- Ensuring the designated teacher has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and Previously LAC safe
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation – feeding back to Governors and Trustees through the Headteacher reporting process.
- The analysis of progress data – in comparison to other pupils
- The attendance data for LAC/Previously LAC – in comparison to other pupils
- Ensure that all staff understand the priority of supporting LAC and Previously LAC

The Designated teacher for LAC and previously LAC is responsible for;

- Building relationships with Health, social care, education and other partners to ensure that they and the VSH (Virtual School Head) understand the support available to LAC and Previously LAC
- Promoting educational achievement of LAC and Previously - LAC
- Acting as the main contact for social care and the DfE
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and achievement and aspiration
- Ensuring that LAC are involved in setting their own targets
- Advising and supporting staff on specific strategies for supporting LAC progress
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritized for one to one tuition and support
- Leading on the development and implementation of the child's PEP – working with the VSH and social care.
- Working with the Headteacher to submit an annual report to the Governing Board, which details the progress of all LAC and Previously LAC.

The DSL is responsible for;

- Keeping current records of the LAC's social worker and VSH
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver – keeping up to dare contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary.

All staff are responsible for;

- Being aware of LAC and Previously LAC and providing them with support and encouragement
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC or Previously LAC
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously LAC
- Being inclusive will activities and visits.

PEP

All LAC must have a care plan – PEPS are an integral part of this care plan.

- The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a student to enable them to make the expected progress.
- The PEP reflects the importance of a personalized approach to learning - specifically to meet the pupils individual needs and circumstances.
- The PEP will be used by the team to support the pupil in educational outcomes, raising aspiration and improving life chances.
- The pupil will be fully included in the PEP process at all stages
- The PEP must address all aspects of needs including;
  - Access to appropriate provision
  - Ongoing catch up support
  - Transitional support where needed
  - School attendance support where appropriate
  - Support to achieve expected levels and complete appropriate qualifications
  - Access to careers advice, information and support in accessing FE, training and employment – which are focused on child's strengths and interests.

Working with other agencies and the Virtual School Head

- The school will ensure that all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social worker in addition to carers or residential social workers
- The school will co-ordinate review meetings
- The school will work effectively with other agencies to share information around any change in circumstance
- Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school
- The Designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and the social worker to complete and manage the PEP
- The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how student Pupil premium plus can use to support the pupil.
- PP plus will be allocated directly to the school and managed by the school.

- The designated teacher will ensure clear communication with the VSH regarding any unauthorized absences.

Training
The designated teacher (and wider staff team as applicable) will access training that includes information about the following;

- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusion
- Accreditation
- Managing behavior
- Safeguarding
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Disadvantage strategy

Student Mental Health
LAC and Previously LAC pupils are more likely to experience social, emotional and mental health challenges which can impact on their education outcomes. Designated teachers will be aware of this in their planning and delivery of support for a LAC or Previously LAC pupil.
The designated teacher, working with the team will ensure that the pupil accesses a quality curriculum which is delivered form the context of a good understanding of pupil mental health and wellbeing. In addition to this the Designated teacher and wider team will ensure timely access to school based TIS informed intervention or external referrals to CAMHS as necessary.

Exclusions
The Trust has a clear relational approach to behaviour. Exclusions are avoided wherever possible for any pupil. Where there is a concern about a child's behaviour specific support strategies are developed and implemented. The Special Partnership schools have clear regard to the DFEs Statutory guidance "Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England".
If the school has specific concerns about the behaviour of a LAC or previously LAC pupil they will inform the VSH as soon as possible.

Exclusion of a LAC, Previously LAC – or any pupil – will only be used as a last resort.