

The Levett School



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Positivity | Determination | Reflection | Integrity

Children in Care Policy

<i>Policy agreed by Management Committee on:</i>	01.07.2025
<i>Review date for Management Committee:</i>	01.07.2026
<i>Allocated Group/Person to Review:</i>	Emma Place
<i>Agreed frequency of Review, by allocated person:</i>	Every Year
<i>Last Review date:</i>	14 th May 2025

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Pupils who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

The Levett School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

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

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- 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 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 (2021) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2. 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 LA under an agreement with their parents.

“Previously-LAC (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).

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and PLAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:
 - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
 - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing information produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy.

The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for LAC.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.

- Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
- Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC (usually the SENCO)
- Allowing the designated teacher time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties, commensurate with the number of LAC children on role
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board on the following:
 - The number of LAC and PLAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment outcomes as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Working with the business manager to identify mainstream schools from which PP+ money should be claimed
- Ensuring PP+ for PLAC is managed effectively and used to meet the specific needs of the individual pupil.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC is responsible for:

- Building outstanding trusted relationships with LAC/PLAC children, to enable them to collect voice of the child thereby advocating for them and representing their views during meetings of professionals.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one interventions, mentoring and therapies.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Ensuring all pupil SEND needs are met.

- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit reports to the governing board, detailing progress and attendance of all LAC and PLAC.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and PLAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PLAC.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and PLAC 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 and PLAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and PLAC.

4. Personal education plan (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 pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work, in order to close the progress gap.
- The responsibilities of the mainstream school, whilst the child is attending the PRU.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is transitioning to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
 - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or PLAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.

Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil, determined by individual need and voice of the child

5. Working with agencies and the Virtual School Head (VSH)

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and PLAC.

Behaviour management strategies and risk assessments will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.

Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without unnecessary delay. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.

PP+ for PLAC allocated directly to mainstream school will be reclaimed by the designated teacher and the business manager, to be managed by Levett School. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or PLAC, and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and PLAC, as examples of best practice.

6. Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and PLAC will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

All training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC and PLAC safe.

7. Safeguarding

The school recognises that many LAC and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation. Trauma Informed Approaches will be used to support LAC and PLAC.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.

Where a LAC or PLAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The headteacher will implement therapeutic approaches across school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a LAC or PLAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8. Pupil mental health

LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health, in conjunction with the Mental Health Lead.

The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and PLAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with LAC or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

Use of Boxall profiling will provide social workers and other relevant professionals a view about LAC and previously-LAC's current emotional wellbeing and any changes since the previous assessment.

The school's senior mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC and previously-LAC.

The school's SEMH Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that LAC or PLAC may face.

9. Exclusions

Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.

The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

10. Pupils with SEND

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.

The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that LAC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

11. Information sharing

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and PLAC are understood and met. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on LAC and PLAC and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the designed teacher for children in care

Doncaster Local Authority - Children in Care Policy

1. Introduction

Doncaster Local Authority (LA) is committed to ensuring that children in care receive high-quality, inclusive education, support, and safeguarding that promotes their well-being, educational outcomes, and long-term success. This policy outlines the responsibilities, strategies, and support systems in place to meet the needs of children and young people in care.

2. Aims and Objectives

- To provide a safe, supportive, and stable environment that meets the emotional, educational, and social needs of children in care.
- To ensure equal access to education, health services, and community activities.
- To promote high aspirations and positive outcomes for children in care.
- To support transitions into further education, employment, and independent living.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children in care through robust monitoring and multi-agency collaboration.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education Act 1996
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Statutory Guidance: Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children (2018)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Local Authority (LA):** Ensures the well-being and educational progress of children in care, coordinates services, and appoints a Virtual School Head (VSH).
- **Virtual School Head (VSH):** Oversees educational progress, advocates for high achievement, and ensures Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place and reviewed **termly**.
- **Designated Teachers:** Work within schools to support children in care, monitor their progress, and liaise with the VSH and social workers.
- **Social Workers:** Develop and review care plans, work with schools and families, and provide emotional and practical support.
- **Foster Carers/Residential Staff:** Provide day-to-day care and support for education and well-being.
- **Health Services:** Ensure children in care have access to health assessments, mental health services, and regular check-ups.

5. Education and Personal Development

- All children in care will have an up-to-date **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** that identifies targets, strengths, and areas for support.
- PEPs will be reviewed **termly** in collaboration with the child, school, social worker, and VSH.
- Doncaster LA will work with schools to provide **catch-up support**, tutoring, and access to extracurricular activities.
- Children in care will have priority access to **school placements**, **SEN support**, and **pupil premium funding**.

6. Health and Well-being

- Children in care will receive regular **health assessments**, including mental health support where necessary.
- Doncaster LA is committed to addressing the emotional and psychological needs of children in care through **CAMHS**, **therapeutic services**, and **mentoring programs**.
- Children will be encouraged to participate in **community activities**, building social skills and resilience.

7. Safeguarding and Stability

- The safety of children in care is paramount, and all safeguarding policies and procedures will be rigorously applied.
- Stability of **school placements** and **living arrangements** is prioritized to prevent disruption to education and well-being.
- Robust measures are in place to address any form of **bullying**, **discrimination**, or **exploitation**.

8. Transition and Independence

- Support will be provided for children transitioning out of care, including **pathway planning** for education, employment, and independent living.

- **Post-16 education and training** opportunities will be explored, with ongoing support for those attending **further education** or **apprenticeships**.
- Young people leaving care will have access to **accommodation support**, **life skills training**, and **employment guidance**.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through regular **audits**, **data analysis**, and **feedback from children and carers**.
- Doncaster LA will annually review the policy to ensure it meets statutory requirements and the evolving needs of children in care.

Virtual School Children in Care team

Doncaster Virtual School - Children in Care team The Virtual School isn't a real school in a building of its own. It is the team of professionals who monitor the educational offer for children in care.

Doncaster Virtual School - CiC

Although the majority of Children in care in Doncaster attend Doncaster Schools some attend schools in other boroughs throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The Virtual School works together with the schools to make sure Children in care in Doncaster make progress and achieve their educational goals.

The Virtual School exists to ensure that children and young people in care have access to good quality education, providing them with improved life chances.

We expect that every Child in care will:

- have a school place
- have a current Personal Education plan (PEP)
- attend a full-time educational placement
- achieve their potential

The Virtual School works in partnership with children, carers, families, school staff, social workers and a wide range of other professionals to improve the educational outcomes of the children in the care of Doncaster Council.

It is our responsibility to:

- promote the progress of children in care
- raise awareness of the importance of education and lifelong learning with all people associated with children in care
- help create opportunities for children in care to achieve success in their educational careers
- work closely with all agencies to improve educational opportunities for children in care

For the children in care on its roll, the Virtual School:

- monitors their attainment, attendance and engagement with learning
- monitors personal education planning and PEPs
- manages the Children in Care Pupil Premium Grant (PP+)

- works with schools and other learning settings to ensure children make good progress and that PP+ is being used effectively
- holds all stakeholders to account
- provides training for designated teachers through meetings and individual support
- advises social workers and carers to ensure they contribute to the education outcomes of children on their case load or in their care placement

The Virtual School also provides advice and guidance for parents and carers of previously looked after children.

How to contact the Doncaster Virtual School - CiC Team

Please Note: Any communication from the Virtual School to schools or other agencies, services and professionals that refers to a child in care's personal details will be sent using the Doncaster Council policy described above.

Virtual school contact information

South and Central Team:

South Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Michelle.Wilson@doncaster.gov.uk

Central Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Marie.Volley@doncaster.gov.uk

North and East Team:

North Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Jane.Cartwright@doncaster.gov.uk

East Locality Raising of Achievement Officer Ceri.Foster@doncaster.gov.uk

Post-16 and Care Leavers Team:

Raising of Achievement Officer Gil.Burgess@doncaster.gov.uk

Raising of Achievement Officer Elizabeth.Wheeler@doncaster.gov.uk

Virtual School Managers:

South and Central Virtual School Manager Andrew.Bowling@doncaster.gov.uk

North and East Virtual School Manager Theresa.Elvin@doncaster.gov.uk

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/about-the-virtual-school-and-the-virtual-school-head>