At the University of Birmingham School we refer to **Pupils** (who are in Years 7-11 and aged 11-16) and **Students** (who are in Years 12/13 and aged 17-18)
Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children Policy (PLAC)

1 Introduction

1.1 The University of Birmingham School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of students in public care.
1.2 The Designated Teacher for LAC is Kate Campbell, SENCO.
1.3 The Designated Teacher for PLAC is Arthur Reeves, Assistant Vice Principal for progress and Intervention
1.4 Governor with responsibility for LAC and PLAC is the Chair of the Pastoral Liaison Committee.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.
2.2.1 This policy includes requirements set out in:
   a) Statutory guidance “Promoting the education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children” (February 2018 DfE framework).
   c) “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC.
2.2 The Governing Body is aware that LAC and PLAC are less likely to attain their potential as shown by national benchmarks. The Governing Body also recognises the emotional struggle with the demands of school life that LAC and PLAC may experience.

2.3 The Aims of the School are to:
   a) Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC and PLAC as for all children.
   b) Ensure that all LAC and PLAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
   c) Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability.
   d) Ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils’ progress and attainment are closely tracked and monitored to prevent any gap between their achievement and other students.
   e) Ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
   f) Ensure carers, social workers and involved external agency workers where relevant, of LAC and PLAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment.
   g) Ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.
Identification - Who are Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children?

3.1 Under the Children Act (1989) a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

3.2 They fall into four main groups:
   a) Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20).
   b) Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38).
   c) Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46).
   d) Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21). The term ‘in care’ refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

3.3 Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘accommodated’ by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s home or in a residential school.

3.4 All these groups are said to be ‘Children Looked After’ (LAC).

3.5 They may be looked after by a local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Birmingham.

3.6 In the University of Birmingham School, we may also have students in a variety of care arrangements outside the family home, such as living with extended family, friends or in private fostering arrangements.

3.7 As good practice, these students are also monitored as LAC.

3.8 Previously looked-after children are those who:
   a) Are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order;
   Or
   b) Were adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales. ‘State care’ is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

3.9 An ‘eligible’ child is a child who is looked after, aged 16 or 17 and has been looked after by a local authority for a period of 13 weeks or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after they reached 14 and ended after they reached 16.

3.10 The Governing Body is aware that the school has a responsibility to ensure parents and carers are aware of our policy towards PLAC, especially regarding the support that the Designated Teacher can provide. The school will ensure that this information is accessible and families are reminded regularly of the support available.

3.11 The Governing Body is also aware that information regarding the previous arrangements of PLAC may be sensitive and families may express a wish for confidentiality. This will be respected by all involved.
4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Assistant Vice-Principal and SENCO, as the Designated Teachers for LAC and PLAC, are responsible for organising:

a) Co-ordination and intervention, advocating for individual children as well as the promotion of understanding in the school including governors of the impact of care and the experiences leading to care on the education of LAC and PLAC.

b) Work with other agencies to co-ordinate support for looked after children and previously looked after children, and ensure that each looked after student has a personal education plan (PEP).

c) Work is carried out with individual children in order to address barriers to learning.

d) Act as the first point of contact for pupils, families, outside agencies and staff of LAC and PLAC.

e) Gaining an awareness of an individual pupil’s point of view about what is problematic in their day to day learning and the curriculum.

f) Policy and practice within the school that is sensitive to the needs of the looked after group and previously looked after group.

g) Staff training to meet the needs of this group of children.

h) Encourage and support a wider school ethos and culture where high aspirations are sought for LAC and PLAC, alongside all other pupils.

4.2 School Staff are responsible for:

a) Following school procedures.

b) Keeping the Designated Teacher informed about the progress of LAC and PLAC.

c) Having high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC.

d) Positively promote the raising of self-esteem for LAC and PLAC.

e) Ensuring any LAC and PLAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.

f) Being familiar with the School’s Policy and Guidance on LAC and PLAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.

g) Liaising with the Designated Teachers where a LAC or PLAC is experiencing difficulties.

h) Giving only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school’s exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement.

i) Contributing to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times.

j) Keeping appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/ carers/ pupil as appropriate.

k) Support and uphold a positive whole school culture which commits to promoting the highest possible educational outcomes for all pupils, including LAC and PLAC.
4.3 The Governing Body is responsible for:

a) Ensuring that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC and PLAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice.

b) Ensuring all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC and PLAC.

c) Ensuring there is a Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC.

d) Liaising with the Principal, Vice Principals, the Designated Teachers and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC and PLAC are met.

e) Nominating a governor with responsibility for LAC and PLAC who links with the Designated Teachers.

f) Receiving regular reports from the Designated Teacher.

g) Ensuring that the school’s policies and procedures give LAC and PLAC equal access in respect of:
   - Admission to school.
   - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational.
   - Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities.
   - Work experience and careers guidance.

h) Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC and PLAC.

i) Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of LAC and PLAC.

5 Ensuring Academic Progress of LAC and PLAC

5.1 Each pupil receives a report on their progress termly, as described in the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy for the School.

5.2 This means that any carers are kept informed of their academic success and effort and that prompt intervention can take place.

5.3 The Assistant Vice Principal (Progress and Intervention) is responsible for reporting to SLT on the progress of every LAC and PLAC and taking any necessary steps to ensure their academic achievement.

5.4 Our LAC and PLAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive.

5.5 The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC and PLAC pupils.

5.6 Where progress is impaired through attendance issues, such as a mid-year transfer, appropriate personalisation of the curriculum will be offered.

5.7 As a guiding principle, all pupils will be encouraged to access a full mainstream timetable and support will be available to enable them to do so.
6 Allocation of resources

6.1 The Governing Body is aware that LAC and PLAC pupils receive Pupil Premium plus funding which must be allocated in a way which ensures the attainment gap between these pupils and the rest of the cohort is minimised.

6.2 The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC and PLAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and the Pupil Premium policy.

6.3 Up to 25% of the Pupil Premium plus funding budget may be allocated for individual cases by negotiation between the Designated Teachers for LAC and PLAC and the Senior Leaders of the school in consultation with parents, carers, outside agencies and the pupils themselves. The Governing Body will ensure the school allocates these resources appropriately as per 6.2

6.4 This may further include provision of a free uniform or Free School Meals to a new LAC or PLAC to the school, whilst other provision is arranged.

7 Monitoring the progress of LAC and PLAC

7.1 The social worker for LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved.

7.2 It is vital that the school assesses the attainment of LAC and PLAC on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

7.3 The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals.

7.4 The Assistant Principal for Progress and Intervention will ensure that appropriate interventions are put in place for all underperforming pupils. The Designated Teachers for LAC and PLAC will be involved for all underperforming LAC and PLAC.

7.4 LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person’s views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

8 Record Keeping

8.1 The Designated Teachers will know who all the LAC and PLAC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker.

8.2 The Designated Teachers will also know about any LAC and PLAC from other authorities.

8.3 It is important that the school flags LAC and PLAC status appropriately in the school’s information systems so that information is readily available as required.
9 Partnership with Parents/Carers and Care Workers

9.1 At the University of Birmingham School we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable and work in partnership with to ensure LAC and PLAC achieve their potential.

9.2 Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

10 Links with External Agencies/Organisations

10.1 We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC and PLAC.

10.2 Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC and PLAC:
   a) LAC teams.
   b) Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services.
   c) Medical Officers.
   d) School Nurses.
   e) CAMHS / FTB.
   f) Education Welfare Officers.
   g) Virtual Schools Team.
   h) Birmingham Children’s Trust Adoption Agency.
   i) Social Care Worker/ Community Care Worker/ Residential Child Care Worker.
   j) Youth Offending Service.
   k) School Age Parents’ Officer.

11 LAC and PLAC Policy Review and Evaluation

11.1 We consider the LAC and PLAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year.

11.2 The outcomes of this review inform the School Development Plan.

12 APPENDIX 1 – examples of good practice suggest that Looked After Children consider the following to be important

- “I would like to have a say as to whether I move school or not.”
- “Money should not be the most important thing when deciding if I should move schools.”
- “I would really like to have a chance to visit the school before I start.”
- “I would like my school work and achievements to be passed on to my new school and not forgotten about.”
- “I would have liked a buddy or peer mentor when I moved to my new school to help me get settled.”
- “We want to be treated as normal. We don’t want to be pitied or treated differently.”
“I’d like to be able to choose a particular teacher to talk to – not just the designated teacher.”
“[I want to keep my life private. I don’t want people knowing everything about me unless I say so.”
“I don’t want my teachers hearing embarrassing/personal details about me and my family at review meetings.”
“I want my own copy of school reports and I want my parents to have a copy.”