

## **Harworth C of E Academy Looked After Children and (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)**

Our pledge is for every member of our school family to 'gain a heart of wisdom' every day. We aim to live wisely as we **Amaze** with our knowledge, zest for learning and kindness to ourselves and others. We aim to live well as we **Achieve** our full potential in a happy, caring and fully inclusive environment based on the core values of Christianity. We use our wisdom and hearts to **Aspire** to reach great heights as we take flight on our individual journey of endless possibilities.

'Gain a heart of wisdom' Psalm 90 v 12

**Amaze. Achieve. Aspire**

At Harworth C of E Academy, our vision is for every member of our school family to *gain a heart of wisdom*—to live wisely, well, and with purpose. We believe that every child should be empowered to *Amaze* with their knowledge and kindness, *Achieve* their full potential in a nurturing environment, and *Aspire* to reach great heights on their individual journey. This policy is rooted in these values and reflects our unwavering commitment to inclusion, compassion, and excellence.

### **Introduction**

This policy outlines the commitment of Harworth C of E Academy to support Looked After Children (LAC) in accordance with the latest UK government legislation and best practices in educational settings. It aims to ensure that all LAC and PLAC receive the necessary support to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally within our school community.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are identified and supported effectively.
- Promote the educational achievement and well-being of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children
- Foster a stable and nurturing environment that reflects our school vision and values: "Gain a heart of Wisdom." (Psalm 90 v 12).

### **Definitions**

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.

LAC/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/carers
- living in a residential children's home or
- 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 and Wales'.

## **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy adheres to the following UK legislation and guidance:

- **Children Act 1989 and 2004**
- **The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023**
- **The Children and Families Act 2014**
- **The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice**

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governors**

The named Governor will ensure that:

- The needs of LAC & PLAC are considered, reflected and supported within all relevant school policies.
- Governors and Senior Leadership are aware of the legal responsibilities and guidance in regards to LAC & PLAC in education.
- Our admissions practices continue to give LAC & PLAC the highest priority admission to the school
- The termly LAC & PLAC monitoring report is scrutinised to ensure that the academic progress of LAC & PLAC is effectively being tracked and challenged, and that staff have the training and resources needed to support this group of children.
- PP and PP+ spending is scrutinised ensuring that is used appropriately and effectively.
- Resources are available to address the needs specific to LAC & PLAC, and that disparity in academic progress in comparison to their peers within school, including patterns in attendance and exclusion and provision for gifted and talented children are highlighted and swiftly addressed.
- An appropriate member of staff is appointed as Designated Teacher, who has access to training and resources (including time) to undertake their responsibilities of LAC & PLAC throughout the school.
- All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC/PLAC.

### **The Headteacher**

Is responsible for ensuring that:

- The role of the Designated Teacher (DT) is filled by an appropriate member of staff at all times (including arrangements to allow for staff absences and resignation). The DT should have the seniority to work with Senior Leadership, Governors and all staff to provide information, advice and champion the achievement and needs of LAC & PLAC.
- The DT is provided with the time to fulfil their role and completes the LA Statutory Designated Teacher Training every two years as well as any other training to assist with the fulfilment of their duties.
- Policies and procedures to monitor and address the needs of, and support for LAC & PLAC are in place and adhered to, with reference to academic progress, admissions attendance, safeguarding and exclusions, and that swift action is taken when concerns arise.
- The curriculum delivered reflects the needs of children with attachment and trauma needs.

### **School Staff**

- All school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities in regards to LAC & PLAC as detailed within this policy and related guidance.
- All staff are aware of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups and their propensity towards being both the victims and perpetrator of Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse.
- An Anti-bullying Policy is in place and stringently followed which recognises that a significant proportion of LAC have experienced bullying at some point.

### **Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)**

The experiences and outcomes of PLAC can be very similar to those of LAC. PLAC educational needs are unlikely to have changed just because their care status has. To address this, the needs of LAC and PLAC are prioritised and addressed in a similar way. The progress of PLAC is reviewed termly and we work proactively with parents and carers and other professionals to address any areas of concern and put in place support as appropriate.

Parents and Carers of PLAC are encouraged to identify their child's previously looked after status on entry to the school and are required to produce documentation to support this. All parents and carers are written to annually to request that they make us aware of their child's PLAC status. All information is treated confidentially. LAC & PLAC receive a similar level of support from the school. The attainment of PLAC is monitored on a termly basis by the Designated Teacher and funding for additional support is funded by the annual PP+ Premium Strategy. Concerns regarding the progress of PLAC are highlighted to parents and carers in a timely fashion so that support can be put in place swiftly. Parents and Carers are directed to the Adoption Fund via LA Social Work assessment where necessary.

### **Admissions (See Admissions Policy and Arrangements for detail)**

Harworth C of E Academy acknowledges and ensures that LAC & PLAC are given priority for School Admissions as outlined in DFE School Admissions Code Guidance

2014 (updated March 2022). We work collaboratively with the Virtual School regarding any concerns that we might have in relation to the admission of LAC & PLAC. The Designated Teacher attends LAC & PLAC admissions meetings and works closely alongside the Virtual School, Social Worker, Carers and any other professionals to ensure that children feel supported, and have a successful smooth transition into school life.

### **Inclusion (See SEND Policy and SEND Information Report for detail)**

LAC & PLAC are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life. Through effective communication with carers, professionals and staff, as well as the appropriate use of pupil premium and the PPG, we work to remove the barriers to LAC & PLAC having a robust, enjoyable and valuable school experience. The experiences of LAC & PLAC have resulted in disproportionate levels of Special Educational Needs within these groups. In acknowledgement of this, individual attainment is monitored closely by the Designated Teacher via the PEP process and concerns highlighted to the SENCO and Virtual School. Concerns raised by Parents, Carers, Social Workers and the Virtual School are welcomed and swiftly acted upon. Where it is felt that further assessment may be needed, LAC & PLAC access to the SEND assessment process and interventions are prioritised.

### **Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)**

Pupil Premium Grant for LAC is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that children meet the targets outlined within their PEP. It can be used to support:

- Academic achievement and progress.
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented.
- Attendance.
- Inclusion [by reducing internal and external exclusion].
- Social skills.
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider.

Where further funding is needed for support, advice from the Virtual School will be sought.

### **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)**

While the PP+ for PLAC is not a 'personal budget,' should a PLAC require support over and above that which is provided for any other child, the PP+ will be used to fund this. PP+ for PLAC is also 'pooled' and used to provide additional support and services to raise the attainment of PLAC within school, for instance:

- Attachment Training for all staff
- One to one tuition
- Mentoring programmes

### **Attendance (See Attendance Policy for detail)**

The attendance of LAC is carefully monitored and reported weekly to the Virtual School. Parents and Carers of LAC & PLAC will be contacted regarding unauthorised

absences daily. Concerns regarding attendance including identified patterns of absence will be raised with parents, carers, social workers and professionals.

## **Exclusions**

LAC and PLAC have disproportionately high levels of exclusions from schools nationally, placing them at a further educational disadvantage.

In line with Local Authority and DfE Guidance, Harworth C of E Academy try to avoid permanently excluding LAC & PLAC. In addition, we work closely with the Local Authority to avoid the fixed term exclusion of both groups. Advice and support from the Local Authority (Social workers, the Virtual School or the Permanence Educational Support Officer) will be sought where it is felt that a LAC or PLAC may become at risk of exclusion. Support and alternatives to exclusion will be considered. Alternatives to exclusion may include:

- Internal exclusions
- Restorative Justice
- Managed Moves (in discussion with the Headteacher of the Virtual School)
- CAMHS support
- Additional therapeutic intervention via the Adoption Fund (PLAC only)

Where a fixed term exclusion of a LAC is unavoidable, parents/carers and the Virtual School will be contacted prior to the child leaving the school site and work will be provided to avoid further gaps in education. Plans and support will be put in place to avoid further exclusion on the child's return to school.

## **Other Relevant School Policies**

- Admissions Policy and Arrangements
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Premium Report
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report

## **Conclusion**

Harworth C of E Academy is committed to ensuring that Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are supported in a manner that reflects our school values and vision. By implementing this policy, we aim to create an inclusive environment where every pupil can Amaze, Achieve, and Aspire.

Review date – September 2026