



Looked After Children Policy

St Michael's Easthampstead CE Primary School

At St Michael's we are a community of active learners who **go above and beyond** in everything we do, equipping ourselves to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of others.

Policy Name	Looked After Children (referred to as LAC and/or CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy
Brief Description:	Outlines the school's aims and responsibilities regarding the support of Children Looked After.
Status: Statutory/non-statutory	Non-statutory (supports compliance with statutory duties)
Other related policies and procedures:	Safeguarding SEND Equality Admissions Anti-Bullying Behaviour
Approval level: HT/Governors/FGB	FGB
Approved by the Governing Board on:	23/3/2026
Frequency to be reviewed	Annually
Latest Date for Next Review:	March 2027
Version + Schedule of Amendments:	3
Signed:	Shaun Riordan
Position:	Headteacher
Date of Signature:	23/3/2026

Go above and beyond with Love:

Kindness, Honesty, Respect and Aspiration

Introduction

Nationally, Children Looked After (LAC/CLA) significantly underachieve in comparison to their peers and are more vulnerable to exclusion, absence, disrupted relationships and safeguarding risks. In keeping with our school vision to *“go above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of others”*, St Michael’s CE Primary School recognises its special responsibility as part of the wider corporate parent role alongside Bracknell Forest Council.

We are committed to ensuring that Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) receive the highest quality teaching, pastoral support and safeguarding protection. We aim to provide a nurturing, trauma-informed and attachment-aware environment where children feel safe, included, valued and able to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

St Michael’s believes that, in partnership with carers, social workers, the Virtual School and external agencies, we can ensure that LAC/CLA and PLAC are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in education and life, and all staff share responsibility for promoting the educational achievement and wellbeing. We consistently ask: ***“Is this good enough for my own child?”***

This policy aligns with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (2022)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Bracknell Forest Virtual School guidance

The terms CLA and LAC are used interchangeably throughout this policy. This policy applies to all children across the school, including those in early years provision.

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Definitions

Children Looked After (LAC/CLA) definition

In accordance with the Children Act 1989, LAC/CLA are children or young people who:

- Are subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order
- Are accommodated by the Local Authority under Section 20
- Are placed with foster carers, relatives, friends, in residential care or supported accommodation
- Are placed with parents while the Local Authority holds parental responsibility

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) definition

PLAC are children who:

- Are no longer looked after because they became subject to an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Arrangements Order
- Were adopted from “state care” outside England and Wales

The school will require evidence (e.g. adoption order, SGO, CAO) to confirm PLAC status for funding and support purposes.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

- For LAC/CLA, PP+ is held by the Virtual School and allocated through the PEP process
- For PLAC, PP+ is delegated directly to the school and must be used to raise attainment and support emotional development

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Aims

St Michael's aims to:

- Provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment where education is valued
- Recognise and respond to the unique developmental, social and emotional needs of LAC/CLA and PLAC
- Support LAC/CLA to enjoy learning, achieve their potential and fully participate in school life
- Ensure school policies apply to LAC/CLA/PLAC while recognising where reasonable adjustments are necessary
- Work proactively with the Virtual School, social workers and carers to maintain strong communication and consistent support
- Embed trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice across the school
- Champion the educational rights, wellbeing and aspirations of LAC/CLA and PLAC
- Reduce barriers to learning and improve attendance, engagement and progress
- Prevent exclusion and escalate concerns early to avoid breakdowns in placement or schooling

Our approach is underpinned by the principles of:

- Prioritising education
- High expectations
- Early intervention
- Physical and emotional wellbeing
- Inclusion and belonging
- Stability and continuity
- Raising aspirations
- Promoting attendance
- Preventing exclusions
- Listening to the child's voice
- Working in partnership with professionals and carers

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Admissions

Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are given the highest priority in the school's admissions arrangements in line with the School Admissions Code.

The school will work in partnership with the Local Authority and Virtual School to ensure that admission arrangements support stability, continuity and the best possible outcomes for the child.

Roles and Responsibilities

To fulfil this policy, the school will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher (DT) to act as an advocate for LAC/CLA and PLAC
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for monitoring this area
- Ensure the DT has sufficient time, seniority, and training to fulfil statutory responsibilities
- Work closely with the Virtual School and Social Care to support LAC/CLA and complete high-quality PEPs
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure information is shared on a strict need-to-know basis

Role of the DSL

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and will work closely with the DT to:

- Monitor safeguarding risks
- Share information with professionals
- Ensure concerns are recorded and acted upon
- Ensure PEP information informs safeguarding plans
- Complete risk assessments where needed

The DSL retains overall responsibility for safeguarding decision-making; the DT contributes looked-after-specific knowledge and oversight.

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Designated Teacher (DT)

Designated Teacher at St Michael's CE Primary School: Shaun Riordan

Governor responsible for Looked After Children/ Previously Looked After Children: Louise Hodgkinson

Under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, all schools must appoint a Designated Teacher. The DT should be a qualified teacher with seniority and expertise to influence whole-school practice. The Designated Teacher will fulfil duties in accordance with Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and associated statutory guidance.

DT Responsibilities

The DT will:

Identification and Knowledge

- Know who all LAC/CLA and PLAC are on roll and maintain accurate confidential records
- Ensure key staff understand the needs of the child while protecting confidentiality

Training and Expertise

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of statutory guidance, attachment and trauma, PEP processes and Virtual School requirements
- Provide training for staff on supporting LAC/CLA/PLAC

Teaching and Learning

- Promote a culture of high expectations and personalised support
- Ensure LAC/CLA/PLAC are prioritised for 1:1 support, targeted interventions, enrichment and extracurricular opportunities
- Support teachers in adapting curriculum and teaching strategies
- The school will work in partnership with the Virtual School Head, who has a statutory responsibility to promote the educational outcomes of Children Looked After.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

- Lead the development of termly PEPs
- Ensure PEPs are completed to Virtual School standards and submitted within deadlines
- Monitor progress towards PEP targets and ensure timely adjustments

Safeguarding

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are recognised in KCSIE 2025 as being at greater risk of:

- Exploitation (CSE, CCE)

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- Going missing from education or care
- Emotional regulation difficulties linked to trauma
- Mental health challenges
- Being targeted for criminal activity or online grooming

The DSL and DT will work closely together to monitor risks and ensure early help, timely referrals, and proactive intervention are in place.

Attendance and Behaviour

The following statutory attendance requirements apply specifically to Children Looked After (LAC/CLA). Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are monitored in line with school attendance procedures, with additional pastoral oversight where needed:

- Ensure the Virtual School is alerted immediately to attendance concerns
- Monitor patterns of behaviour, safeguarding risks and emotional wellbeing
- Convene urgent multi-agency meetings where concerns arise or where risk of exclusion is present
- Ensure exclusion is only considered as an absolute last resort - Suspension or permanent exclusion of a LAC/CLA must only be used as a last resort and in exceptional circumstances. The Virtual School must be informed before any decision is made and an emergency multi-agency meeting must be held.
- Attendance for LAC/CLA is monitored weekly.
- Any attendance concerns are shared immediately with the social worker and Virtual School.
- LAC/CLA must not be removed from the school roll without Local Authority approval.
- Attendance codes are applied strictly in line with DfE and Virtual School expectations.

PP+ Management

- For LAC/CLA: liaise with Virtual School regarding PP+ allocation through the PEP
- For PLAC: manage PP+ spending transparently, ensuring it directly supports attainment and wellbeing

Transitions

The DT ensures that LAC/CLA and PLAC receive enhanced transition support when joining the school, changing classes, or moving to another school. This includes sharing records promptly, arranging transition meetings, and providing additional visits where appropriate.

- Ensure enhanced transition planning for any child joining, leaving, or moving within the school
- Transfer records swiftly and securely to new schools

Reporting

- Provide an **annual anonymised report** to governors covering:
 - Progress
 - Attendance
 - Behaviour
 - Exclusions (if any)
 - PEP quality

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- PP+ impact
- Training undertaken

Confidentiality & Information Sharing

Information about a child's looked-after status will be shared only with staff who need the information to support the child's education, safeguarding or wellbeing. All records will be stored securely in accordance with safeguarding and GDPR requirements.

The Governing Body

The governing body will:

- Ensure monitoring is strategic and does not involve individual case management.
- Support the LA in its statutory duty to promote the education of LAC/CLA/PLAC
- Ensure the DT receives adequate time and training
- Monitor how effectively the policy is operating
- Receive and evaluate the DT's annual report
- Review associated policies with consideration of LAC/CLA/PLAC needs, including:
 - Admissions
 - Behaviour
 - Anti-Bullying
 - Equality
 - Child Protection & Safeguarding
 - SEND

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Linked policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- EYFS Policy

Summary

St Michael's CE Primary School is committed to championing the needs and rights of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. We recognise their additional vulnerabilities, the impact of early trauma and adversity, and the importance of stable, supportive and sensitive relationships in enabling them to thrive.

Through high expectations, strong partnership working, and a compassionate, trauma-informed approach, we strive to ensure that every LAC/CLA and PLAC child is able to shine with courage, faith and kindness.

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the Virtual School.

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