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## **The Gilberd School**

### **Policy for Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children**

**Designated LAC & PLAC Teacher: Mr Simon Auton**

**LAC & PLAC Governor: Mrs Linda Gous**

**Senior Team Link for DT: Ms Rebecca Litton**

At The Gilberd School our aim is to equip every student with the knowledge, learning power and character necessary for success. We believe unswervingly that, regardless of background or prior attainment, every student entering The Gilberd School has the potential to leave with a set of qualifications and values that will enable them to move successfully onto the next steps in education, training or apprenticeships and to make a valuable contribution to wider society.

Fundamental to the realisation of this challenging aspiration, is an absolute commitment to providing a learning environment where all students, including Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children make exceptional progress and fulfil their potential.

#### **Who are Looked After Children (LAC)?**

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. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20).
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38).
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46).
- 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. 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. All these groups are said to be 'Looked After Children' - LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

## **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 the child is to live with any persons or has been adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales.

Many LAC/PLAC will have experienced disrupted schooling and gaps in learning. In addition, a significant proportion of LAC/PLAC have some form of Special Educational Need and or have been excluded from school. This has resulted in the attainment of this group not being in line with the attainment of their peers nationally. The Gilberd School will analyse the performance data to show the progress of all LAC/PLAC in comparison with their peers and ensure the necessary steps are taken to support them in making progress.

Our aim at the Gilberd School is for LAC/PLAC to achieve their full potential and achieve high educational outcomes, comparable to their peers. This requires us to ensure that LAC/PLAC experience educational stability and that their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised. We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for LAC/PLAC and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that LAC/PLAC experience and feel able to support the children, as needs arise.

## **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our LAC/PLAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC/PLAC.

## **Allocation of resources**

The Headteacher & The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC/PLAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. 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.

An appropriate member of staff is appointed as Designated Teacher, who has access to training and resources (including time) to undertake their responsibilities and has the seniority to influence The Gilberd School Senior Leadership, to meet and champion the needs of LAC/PLAC throughout the school.

All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of LAC/PLAC.

## **Monitoring the progress of LAC**

The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of the young person joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC’s attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

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

**The following areas are covered in the PEP:**

- Academic progress and attainment.
- Behaviour.
- Independent learning.
- Involvement in co-curricular activities.
- Additional needs/SEND (if relevant).
- Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences).
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).

The PEP is updated termly, as part of the statutory reviewing process. Each statutory review of the care plan documents progress towards educational targets set at the previous PEP review.

**Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher (DT) will know who all the LAC/PLAC in the school are and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC/PLAC from other authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC/PLAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

**Staff Development**

We encourage staff to attend courses or undertake wider reading that will help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC/PLAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC/PLAC, such as Trauma and Attachment Awareness and then disseminate this training to all staff.

**Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

At The Gilberd School we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC/PLAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to develop and enhance this partnership.

**Links with external agencies/organisations**

The DT and appropriate school staff will make every effort to engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of LAC/PLAC. We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC/PLAC. Colleagues from the following support services (not an exhaustive list) may be involved with individual LAC/PLAC:

- LAC/PLAC teams.
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEND services.
- School Nurse.
- CAMHS.
- Education Welfare Officers.
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential childcare worker.
- Youth Offending Service.
- Virtual Schools.

### **Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for all LAC/PLAC**

The statutory guidance for school governing bodies places a duty on them to designate a member of staff to take responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of all LAC/PLAC registered at the school. The designated teacher is responsible for:

Coordinating support for LAC/PLAC in school and providing information, advice and training for staff and governors to raise awareness of their needs. For example, raising awareness of possible Mental Health needs and the impact of poor attachment and trauma on behaviour and learning.

- Being the first point of contact for the Local Authority, LAC/PLAC, their carers and associated professionals, ensuring that a member of staff represents the school at all relevant meetings.
- Liaising with the Virtual School, Social Workers, Carers and other relevant professionals when LAC/PLAC are experiencing difficulties and/or at risk of exclusion, arranging meetings to share concerns and plan interventions.
- Ensuring that all LAC/PLAC (and their carers) have an identified member of staff that they can approach in school.
- Monitoring the progress of LAC/PLAC throughout the school year culminating in an annual progress report to Governors.
- Coordinating and planning smooth LAC/PLAC educational transitions, including starting school, changing Key Stage etc keeping in mind their needs, in conjunction with the carers, parents, Virtual School and other professionals.
- Swiftly identifying possible learning needs, safeguarding and mental health concerns to the Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health Lead and SENCO where appropriate and jointly planning interventions to address these concerns.
- Encouraging LAC/PLAC to take part in extracurricular activities and trips, and removing any hidden barriers to their involvement.
- Ensuring instances of bullying affecting LAC/PLAC is acted upon swiftly and that appropriate support is put in place.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of LAC/PLAC, sharing personal information on a need to know basis only.
- Using the PLAC Pupil Premium+ appropriately and creatively to address the needs of PLAC in school.
- Ensuring that LAC/PLAC have access to appropriate ongoing careers advice at the earliest opportunity and that they are encouraged to engage with post 16 education.
- PEP's (Personal Education Plans)
  - Ensuring that PEP's for LAC are accurate, effective, relevant and completed within the identified timescales with the child, social worker, carers and any other relevant professionals.
  - PEP's for LAC with EHCP's complement rather than mirror the EHCP.
  - Advising relevant staff of PEP targets, making sure that staff work with pupils to meet their targets.
  - Ensuring that the Pupil Premium for LAC is used appropriately to support the child in meeting targets outlined within the PEP.

## **Responsibilities of all staff**

All staff who work with LAC/PLAC at The Gilbert School are responsible for:

- Having the highest expectations of LAC/PLAC in terms of attainment, behaviour and attendance.
- being sensitive to the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families.
- Facilitating discrete support, as appropriate in conjunction with the DT and subject/curriculum leader.
- Understanding the underlying causes which may be behind a LAC/PLAC's behaviour but maintaining the highest expectations of their behaviour.
- Knowing the targets on LAC's PEPs and carefully tracking their progress towards achieving them.
- Putting in place remedial action if the progress of LAC/PLAC is not on track to achieve their targets.
- Being familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC/PLAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaising with the Designated Teachers where a LAC/PLAC is experiencing difficulties.
- Keeping the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC/PLAC's progress.
- Are aware of the prevalence of LAC/PLAC mental health needs, and flag concerns to the DT and Student support manager year team and raise any issues at LABS meetings.
- Ensure that the individual needs of LAC/PLAC are met through quality first adaptive teaching.
- Are aware that LAC/PLAC have high rates of SEN and flag concerns regarding learning with the SENCO and DT.
- Work proactively with the DT to ensure that LAC/PLAC meet their targets and achieve, highlighting any barriers to learning, and inclusion at the earliest opportunity.
- Work to ensure the Inclusion of LAC/PLAC within the School community, maintaining their confidentiality while also providing support with raising their self-esteem, and supporting their relationships with peers.
- Playing their part in creating a 'LAC/PLAC-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for LAC/PLAC by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available.

## **Previously Looked After Children**

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, 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. Any information will be 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 additional support is made available, as evidenced in the Pupil 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.

## **Exclusions**

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a LAC/PLAC, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and

loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of LAC/PLAC.

The Gilberd School will only issue official suspensions in line with the Student Code of Conduct, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement/family setting. The Gilberd School will review each case carefully and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

### **Responsibilities of Governors**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Appointing a Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC. This role is assigned to Mr Simon Auton (Assistant SENCO/DT) [sau@gilberd.com](mailto:sau@gilberd.com). The role is supported by Ms Rebecca Litton (Assistant Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead) [rli@gilberd.com](mailto:rli@gilberd.com).
- Ensuring all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC. The Governor responsible for LAC/PLAC is Mrs Linda Gous [lgu@gilberd.com](mailto:lgu@gilberd.com).
- Liaising with the headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met.
- Nominating a governor with responsibility for LAC/PLAC who links with the Designated Teacher.
- Receiving regular updates in the termly Headteacher's Report from the Designated Teacher.
- Annually reviewing the effective implementation of The Gilberd School policy for LAC/PLAC.
- Ensuring that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- Ensuring that the school's policies and procedures give LAC/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.