

High Tunstall College of Science



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LAC Policy

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Stakeholder Consulted	-	Admissions and Safeguarding Committee
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Responsibility for Review	-	Senior Teacher- Inclusivity/ Student Support Officer (LAC)

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Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for LAC and previously-LAC (PLAC) are of real concern. Students who are looked after require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

High Tunstall College of Science endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our students. With this in mind, we aim to:

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

1. **[Updated]** Legal framework

1.1. **[Updated]** 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'
- **[Updated]** DfE (2023) 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following college policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home College Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy.

2. Definitions

2.1. **"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.

2.2. **“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

3.1. The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the college has a coherent policy for LAC and PLAC.
- Reviewing the college'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 the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the college.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the Headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

3.2. 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 college 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 college'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 student 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 student'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.

3.3. The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing body annually on the following:
 - The number of LAC and PLAC in the college
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other student groups
 - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other student groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other student groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for PLAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

3.4. The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC (Senior Teacher: Inclusivity and Student Support Officer for LAC) is responsible for:

- 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 college; 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 children 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 tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in college to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all student 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 an annual report to the governing body, which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC.

3.5. 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.

3.6. The SENDCO 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.

3.7. 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)

- 4.1. All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.
- 4.2. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a student to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- 4.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- 4.4. The college 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.
- 4.5. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- 4.6. The PEP will address the student'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.
 - Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in college because of suspension or exclusion.
 - Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
 - College 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-college hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.
- 4.7. 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.
 - 4.8. Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the student.

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

- 5.1. The college will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- 5.2. The college will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review.
- 5.3. The college 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.
- 5.4. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the college, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- 5.5. The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- 5.6. Through the designated teacher, the college 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 delay.
- 5.7. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how pupil premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- 5.8. PP+ for PLAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the college.
- 5.9. The college 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.
- 5.10. If deemed necessary, the college will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

- 5.11. The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.
- 5.12. The college will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and PLAC.

6. Training

- 6.1. The designated teacher and other college staff involved in the education of LAC and PLAC have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:
 - School admissions arrangements
 - SEND
 - Attendance
 - Exclusions
 - Homework
 - GCSE options
 - Managing and challenging behaviour
 - Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
 - Supporting students 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. **[Updated]** Safeguarding

- 7.1. The college 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 students vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.
- 7.2. 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.

- 7.3. **[Updated]** 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 within the family or in the community.
- 7.4. The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the college to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.
- 7.5. 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.
- 7.6. 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 students who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8. Student mental health

- 8.1. LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- 8.2. The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the college 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.
- 8.3. The college 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 students.
- 8.4. A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used on a termly basis to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC and PLAC's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

- 8.5. The college's senior mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC and PLAC, and will always either be a member of, or be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO, or DSL.
- 8.6. The college's SEMH Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that LAC or PLAC may face.

9. **[Updated]** Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

- 9.1. Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the college's Behaviour Policy.
- 9.2. **[Updated]** The college will have regard to the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.
- 9.3. Where the college has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the college 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.
- 9.4. Suspension will only be used as a last resort, after the college and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent suspension, and any additional arrangements to support the student's education in the event of suspension.
- 9.5. **[Updated]** Where a looked-after child is at risk of being suspended or permanently excluded, the school will engage with the designated teacher and the pupil's parents, or other individuals involved in the pupil's care.

The designated teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible to work together, and with other relevant individuals, to consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the pupil's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

- 9.6. The college will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid suspension.
- 9.7. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the college's Behaviour Policy or where

allowing the student to remain in college would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

- 9.8. **[New]** Where a looked-after child is excluded, the school will document the provision of immediate suitable education in the pupil's PEP.

10. Students with SEND

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. The SENDCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- 10.3. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.
- 10.4. 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 students 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

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. The arrangements set out include:
- Who has access to information on LAC and PLAC and how data will remain secure.
 - How students 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 college and relevant LA departments.
 - How relevant information about individual students is passed between authorities, departments and the college when students move.

12. Monitoring and review

- 12.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Senior Teacher (Inclusivity) and Student Support Officer (LAC).
- 12.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2024.