



THE ORCHARD SCHOOL

Looked After Children (LAC) & Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

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Chair of Governors:

Headteacher:

Ethos of The Orchard School

At The Orchard School, Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that every child has the potential to grow, thrive, and succeed when provided with the right environment, relationships, and support. The Orchard Way guides everything we do, ensuring that our approach is therapeutic, inclusive, and centred on understanding behaviour as communication. We are committed to nurturing the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs of our pupils, recognising their unique challenges while celebrating their individuality. Through strong relationships and a culture of care, we create a school where every pupil feels safe, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Principles of Our Ethos:

1. **Respect for the Individual:** Every pupil deserves respect, dignity, and the opportunity to be heard.
2. **Relationships at the Heart of Learning:** Positive, trusting relationships form the foundation of our work.
3. **Equity and Inclusion:** We ensure all pupils have access to the support they need to succeed.
4. **Therapeutic and Nurturing Approaches:** We integrate therapeutic strategies to promote resilience.
5. **High Expectations with Compassion:** Balancing aspirations with understanding and personalisation.
6. **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Families, carers, and agencies work together to support pupils.
7. **A Safe and Predictable Environment:** Structure and boundaries foster trust and confidence.
8. **Restorative Practices:** Addressing conflicts through understanding, accountability, and growth.

Mission Statement

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out how The Orchard School supports Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). Many pupils have experienced adversity, disrupted education or trauma, and may require enhanced support to ensure they thrive socially, emotionally and academically. The policy reflects statutory duties, local authority guidance and best practice across Kent SEMH and special schools.

The school prioritises stability, consistent relationships, high expectations and a predictable approach to ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils experience equitable access to education and strong pastoral care.

2. Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC)

Children who are:

- in the care of a local authority; or
- provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

Children who are no longer looked after because they have:

- been adopted (including from overseas)
- become subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- become subject to a Child Arrangements Order (CAO)
- returned home under a Residence Order

PLAC are entitled to support until age 18.

3. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that LAC and PLAC pupils:

- experience stability, safety and positive relationships
- make strong academic, social and emotional progress
- receive targeted support and high-quality teaching
- have their needs understood and planned for
- benefit from effective use of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)
- have their voice heard
- experience smooth transitions during placement or school moves
- are supported by strong multi-agency collaboration

4. Statutory and Local Framework

This policy reflects:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Designated Teacher (Looked After and Previously Looked After Children) Regulations 2009
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children (DfE)
- Promoting the Education of Previously Looked After Children (DfE)
- Kent Virtual School guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND Code of Practice

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- ensures statutory duties for LAC and PLAC are met
- receives an anonymised annual report
- ensures the Designated Teacher has appropriate status and training

Headteacher

- ensures the policy is implemented
- ensures staff understand responsibilities for LAC and PLAC pupils
- supports the Designated Teacher in fulfilling statutory duties

Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC

- leads on all aspects of LAC and PLAC provision
- ensures Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are completed termly and are high quality
- is the named link with the Virtual School and social workers
- maintains up-to-date information about each pupil
- ensures use of PP+ funding is effective and transparent
- monitors progress, attendance and engagement
- supports teachers to understand the child's learning profile and needs
- ensures pupil voice informs decisions
- supports transitions and placement stability
- ensures staff receive appropriate guidance and training

All Staff

- maintain high expectations for LAC and PLAC pupils
- contribute to PEP targets where appropriate
- work consistently and relationally with pupils
- report concerns promptly to the Designated Teacher or DSL
- support predictable, safe routines

6. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All LAC pupils must have a termly PEP.

A PEP will:

- outline strengths and needs
- include academic, SEMH and attendance targets
- detail strategies agreed with school, carers and professionals
- record how PP+ will be used
- show pupil voice
- identify roles and responsibilities

A high-quality PEP is essential for ensuring that interventions meet individual needs.

PLAC pupils may not have statutory PEPs, but the school will create **internal support plans** where needed.

7. Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

PP+ for LAC is held by the Virtual School and allocated through the PEP process.

PP+ must be used to:

- improve engagement and learning
- provide targeted intervention or therapeutic support
- support attendance and emotional regulation
- address gaps in learning
- support access to enrichment

PP+ must not be used for:

- core staffing
- services the school should already provide

PLAC PP+ is delegated directly to the school and must be used with the same expectations of transparency and impact.

8. Curriculum and Teaching

The school tailors the curriculum to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC pupils. Staff must:

- consider gaps due to disrupted schooling

- ensure lessons are predictable and structured
- use relational approaches to support regulation
- provide individual scaffolding and adaptive teaching
- recognise the impact of trauma and attachment needs on learning

9. Behaviour and Relationships

Behaviour is understood as communication. Staff will:

- use therapeutic and relational approaches
- avoid punitive responses
- provide co-regulation
- maintain predictable boundaries
- develop support plans where necessary
- work restoratively when harm or conflict occurs

If a behaviour plan is in place, it will link to the PEP or PLAC support plan.

10. Attendance, Timetables and Exclusions

- Attendance is monitored daily.
- Any concerns are shared promptly with carers and the Virtual School.
- Reduced timetables must be time-limited, regularly reviewed, and agreed with all professionals.
- Exclusion is always a last resort. The Virtual School and Designated Teacher must be consulted before any decision to exclude.

11. Safeguarding

- LAC and PLAC are recognised as vulnerable under Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Staff must follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.
- Information about LAC/PLAC status is confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

12. Admissions, Transitions and Placement Stability

The Designated Teacher oversees:

- enhanced transition planning
- liaison with previous or receiving schools
- early sharing of key information
- home-school communication during transition

- strategies to maintain placement stability

The school works to minimise disruption during placement changes.

13. Multi-Agency Working

The school works in partnership with:

- Kent Virtual School
- social workers
- carers and families
- health services
- educational psychologists
- therapeutic services
- SEND services
- other schools and settings

Information is shared appropriately and promptly to support the child's needs.

14. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All LAC/PLAC information is processed in line with GDPR.

- Information is securely stored.
- Access is limited to staff who need to know.
- Sensitivity and confidentiality are always upheld.

15. Training

The Designated Teacher receives regular, up-to-date training.

All staff receive training on:

- trauma and attachment
- relational practice
- understanding LAC/PLAC needs
- Kent Virtual School processes

Additional training is provided as needed.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Designated Teacher provides an annual anonymised report to the Governing Body covering:

- attainment and progress
- attendance
- PEP quality and timeliness
- use and impact of PP+

- exclusions (if any)
- pastoral and SEMH support
- multi-agency involvement

The policy is reviewed annually.