

Tapton SCHOOL

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Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). Including Special Guardianship Orders and Private Fostering Policy

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COMMITTEE: Personal Development, Behaviour and Inclusion

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LEVEL OF CHANGE: Minor

NEXT REVIEW: March 2026

Definitions:

Looked After Children: A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a Looked After Child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care.

Previously Looked After Child: A child who is no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or they were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

Special Guardianship is a formal court order which places a child or young person with someone permanently. This could be a grandparent, close relative or a family friend. Special Guardianship means that the child lives with carers who have parental responsibility for them until they are 18 years old.

Private Fostering is when a child under 16 (18 if disabled) is cared for by someone other than a parent, a person with parental responsibility or a close relative, for 28 days or more (including occasional short breaks).

Rationale

Tapton School recognises that children who are not cared for by their biological parents can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting. We are committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We recognise that these children may have faced significant trauma in the form of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) including abuse, neglect, loss and/or rejection. When children are exposed to these adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their learning, as well as on their ability to think and to interact with others.

Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, national progress and attainment data clearly shows that LAC and PLAC are at greater risk of exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school. Tapton believes that the educational experience of **all children** should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every child can be successful.

We believe that our school has a major part to play in ensuring that all children can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing. School can be a source of stability for children who may have been subject to emotional distress and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and thrive.

Designated CLA Teacher: Steve Rippin
Designated CLA Deputy: Cathy Czauderna
Designated CLA Governor: Claire Fowler

Responsibility of Designated Teacher and Assistant

Our Designated Teacher and Assistant will:

- Understand the role of carers, social workers and other relevant parties, be the named contact for them and maintain regular communication with them.
- Understand the role of the Virtual School and respond promptly to requests for information.
- Act as an advocate for LAC and PLAC in order to maintain high aspirations, allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances.
- To care and provide support for the LAC and PLAC, as a good corporate parent, 'good enough for my own child'.
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan for LAC students to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition to a new school or phase of education and ensure the speedy transfer of information.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed for every LAC student with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people once a term (as requested by the Virtual School)
- Be responsible for the implementation of the child's PEP and lead in promoting their educational achievement. This includes monitoring academic progress and attendance, and ensuring the necessary support is in place to meet the child's learning, social and emotional needs. This may involve working closely with other key members of staff e.g. the wider Inclusion Team
- Ensure that children are able to discuss their progress and are involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how LAC and PLAC children learn and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements, through training, Inclusion meetings and Student Engagement Plans
- Ensure that every LAC and PLAC has a Student Engagement Plan that reflects their strengths and needs illustrates ways of getting the best out of them.
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC have at least one identified member of staff that they can readily talk to – this is written on the Student Engagement Plan. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- To celebrate the success of all LAC and PLAC
- Co-ordinate any support for LAC and PLAC that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC and PLAC to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible a member of staff attends planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Children Looked After.
- Ensure staff members are aware that the support of LAC and PLAC is a key priority.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.

- Ensure all child’s teaching staff know he/she is a LAC and PLAC and treat information confidentially.

The Responsibilities of all Staff

All our staff will:

- Be aware of the impact of trauma (including abuse, neglect, loss and separation) on children’s development and their ability to build relationships, and how this might affect their behaviour.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievements of LAC and PLAC, as for all pupils.
- Understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their LAC or PLAC status.
- Be aware that some curriculum content may trigger difficult emotions, such as schoolwork on “family” / loss.
- Respond positively to a pupil’s request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher’s requests for information which feeds into the child’s PEP document and enables a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child’s own understanding of how they are being supported with their education.
- Work to enable LAC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Celebrate the successes of all LAC and PLAC.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC and PLAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC and PLAC.
- Inform the safeguarding team through CPOMMs if you become aware of a child’s living arrangements changing. This may be a private fostering arrangement which will need to be referred by the safeguarding team to the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub on 0114 2734855. For advice ring the Connected Persons Team on 0114 2736489.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

- Identify a designated Governor for LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC.
- Ensure the school’s other policies and procedures support their needs.

Procedures: The Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of LAC and PLAC, through an annual report.
- Ensure that LAC and PLAC are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school’s oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure LAC and PLAC achieve and enjoy

their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC and PLAC are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 1. The number of LAC and PLAC on the school's roll (if any).
 2. Their attendance, compared to other pupils.
 3. Behaviour.
 4. Involvement in school activities.
 5. Their GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 6. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 7. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.