Looked After Children Policy

Reviewed:	**Autumn 2026**
Next review:	**Autumn 2027**
Person in charge:	**Headteacher**
Governance:	**Chair of LGB**

Pastoral Care/Spiritual Development

We place the pastoral care of pupils, staff and families at the heart of how we work. This informs our policy framework. The quality of relationships between all members of school staff, pupils and stakeholders, and the relationship with parents and carers is the area that is most commonly associated with the ethos of the schools in our Trust. It is expressed in the terms of sharing and caring.

In the Church schools in our Trust, we follow the teachings of:

> **'Love your neighbour as yourself'** – Matthew 22:39.
> **'This is my commandment: love each other'** - John 15:17.

In the none Church schools in our Trust, we follow the spiritual ethos of treating others as we would ask to be treated and to care for others with kindness and respect.

In our schools we believe every pupil is an individual who is valued for who they are.

We have a series of overlapping networks of relationships, which includes governors, staff, children, parents, church members, and members of the community, which the school seeks to serve. Our pastoral work will strive to meet the significant challenge to create and maintain such networks including in our Church schools in ways which reflect the Gospel values of love and care. Those who are in leadership roles, which includes all who have a particular responsibility, ensure that by their personal example they set the high standards expected.

It is from this premise that both respect and care will pervade all aspects of life at Northern Lights Learning Trust. A desire for everyone to flourish, knowing that everyone reflects God's image is pivotal in all of our schools, including our Church schools. This will influence how we reward and teach discipline. It will affect how we value work and the achievements of pupils and staff. It will be seen in the way in which the school environments are created and cared for, in the way in which the needs of pupils, parents, and community are met, and in the way in which teaching and non-teaching staff work together effectively as a team.

Pastoral care pervades all aspects of school life and therefore will be reflected in the way the schools are organised and the policies are written and implemented.

Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for LAC and previously-LAC can be affected and at times are a concern. Pupils who are looked after can often require special additional attention in order to improve their situation and their long-term educational attainment and achievement.

St Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. Our school vision is for all to be who God created them to be and have fullness of life.

With this in mind, we aim to:

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

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to 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'
- DfE (2026) 'Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Strategy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

Definitions

Looked-after children are registered pupils that are:

In the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:

A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them

A special guardianship order

An adoption order

They appear to the governing board to have:

Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and

Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC 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 previously – LAC safe
- Ensuring LAC and previously –LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustment are made, if necessary.

Virtual School Head – Local Authorities

- 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 previously-LAC
- Working with the school 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 previously LAC as effectively as possible
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for LAC
- Ensuring that up-to-date and effective PEPs are in place and focus on educational outcomes
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority' corporate parenting structure

Headteacher is responsible for:

Appointing designated teacher for LAC – Mrs Vikki Wilson

- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties
- Overseeing the policy and monitoring of its implementation, feeding back to the Governing Body
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority
- Ensuring PP+ for previously LAC is managed effectively

The DSL/SENDCo is responsible for:

- Keeping up to date records of LACs respective Social Worker and VSH
- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and previously-LAC
- Liaising with class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously LAC

At St Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Vikki Wilson

The SENDCo and Deputy DSL is Sara McLaren. Caroline Pickles is also a Deputy DSL.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and previously LAC 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 previously LAC
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously LAC

PEP- Personal Education Plan

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The school 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. All relevant bodies such as the LA, designated teacher and carers will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs; including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age
- On-going catch up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes; support to meet expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stages

Pupil Mental Health:

- LAC and previously LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. All 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
- A strengths and difficulties questionnaire can be used to help professionals support the child and their emotional well-being.
- At St Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School, we may use the Thrive assessment tool to identify specific areas of strength and areas for development associated with pupils social, emotional and mental health.

Pupils with SEND:

- 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 as well as detailed in their My Book.

Information Sharing:

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously – LAC are understood and met. At St Peter's Elwick CofE Primary, we ensure that support and provision is provided for all our LAC and their families. We work together in partnership with all external agencies to ensure impact and outcomes for our children.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis