Greater Manchester Education Trust

LOOKED AFTER & PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

V1.1

Approval History

Approved By:	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Comments
Trust Board	23.03.26	V1.1	

Revision History

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Owner/Editor
09.03.26	Sep 22	• Clarified roles and statutory responsibilities for Governors, Headteachers and Designated Teachers, including reporting and LAC review attendance. • Updated PEP arrangements, confirming **three PEPs per year** and clearer use of **LAC Pupil Premium**. • Refreshed contextual content and named roles, including alignment with **The Manchester Promise**.	Sofia Zarar – Whalley Range

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1.0 Introduction and Intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after children and previously looked after children are of real concern locally and nationally. Children and young people who are looked after require powerful advocacy and positive discrimination in their favour in order to improve their situation. It is recognised that this does not disappear when leaving care.

The Greater Manchester Education Trust endeavours to provide positive experiences and offers stability, safety, continuity and individual care and attention for all our students. With this in mind, we aim to:

• encourage students to reach the highest standards of which they are capable and to make good progress from what they are currently already able to do;

• ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and are enjoying a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation;

• plan realistically and using the school's resources efficiently in order to ensure the school meets the needs of the children;

• promote a positive approach in all aspects of school life;

• help students develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

2.0 Definitions

Under the Children Act 1989 a child is legally defined as 'LAC' by a local authority if they are:

- accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order
- the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

Previously LAC children are those who:

- are no longer LAC by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or
- were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

It is particularly important that previously LAC children are supported in order to promote lifelong resilience, progression and opportunity. A previously looked after

child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safeguarded

3.0 The Manchester Promise

The Greater Manchester Education Trust is committed to the Manchester Local Authority Promise for Looked After Children.

Our promise is to respect you as an individual, regardless of religious belief, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity or disability, and support you on your journey to be a resilient and confident person in your own right.

Respect you

- We will make sure we support you in a kind, compassionate, considerate and timely way.
- We will listen to you and value your voice, as an individual and through our Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Council.
- We will involve you in decisions and plans about your life.
- We will make sure you feel comfortable and supported to attend your meetings and reviews if you wish to.
- We will try to help you to understand why you are in our care.
- We will talk to you in a language or use methods that you understand.

Care for you

- We will make sure we provide a stable environment for you to live and learn in.
- We will do everything to make sure your happiness, wellbeing and safety are our priorities.
- We will support you to stay healthy and make sure you get good health care when you need it (including your physical, mental and sexual health).
- We will make sure you live with people who care about and support you.
- We will wherever possible help you keep in contact with the people who matter to you.
- We will provide you with accurate information and advice and help you to access services that can help you.
- We will make sure you know your rights and who to turn to if you are unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint.

Support you

- We will provide a named teacher in your school or education setting who understands the issues that you may face.
- We will try to avoid unnecessary placement and/or school changes.
- We will help you to find hobbies and interests to develop new skills and friendships.

- We will support you in any pathways you choose beyond school or college, including going to university or into an apprenticeship.
- We will encourage you to be the best you can be and achieve the goals and dreams you have set.

Help you grow

- We will help and support you to become independent and take charge of your own life.
- We will do everything we can to build the skills and confidence to help you make a smooth transition into adult life.
- We will show you how to be responsible for your own actions and how to participate as an active citizen.

4.0 The Responsibilities of the Academy Committee or IMB

These are to:

- Identify a nominated lead for Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children
- The nominated leads within the Greater Manchester Education Trust are:

Betsy Sara	Levenshulme High School
Fiona O'Sullivan	The East Manchester Academy
Kenny Ross	Whalley Range High School
Janell Wilken	Parrs Wood High School

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

Each Academy Committee or IMB should:

- monitor the academic progress of Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children, through an annual report
- regularly scrutinise and the challenge the data that will be incorporated into an annual report throughout the year - in order to help to ensure positive outcomes for all Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children
- ensure that Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's admission policy

- work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Children Looked After 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 their responsibilities
- support the Academy Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children are recognised and met.

5.0 The Academy Headteacher responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of each Academy Headteacher to oversee this policy and monitor its implementation.
- Academy Headteachers will make all members of staff aware that the support of looked after children and previously looked after children is a key priority.
- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children, whose role is set out within this policy.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Children Looked After and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children.
- Academy Headteachers will allow the Designated Teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties, including maintaining up to date training.
- Academy Headteachers will lead in actively challenging negative stereotypes of looked after children and previously looked after children.

6.0 The Designated Teacher

- Under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, all maintained schools are required to have a Designated Teacher for looked after children.
- The work of the Designated Teacher is set out in the DFE publication 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' February 2018.
- Government Guidance indicates that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen. They should be an advocate for Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and support high expectations for them".
- The Designated Teachers within the Greater Manchester Education Trust's schools are:

Michelle Dean	Levenshulme High School
Gill Houghton	The East Manchester Academy
Anna McDonald	Whalley Range High School
Emma Foster	Parrs Wood High School

- The primary duty of the Designated Teacher is to promote the educational achievement of looked after children a previously looked after children at the school.
- It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure the Designated Teacher have received adequate training for the role.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations, track student progress and take the necessary action to support those high expectations and aspirations
- Ensure each student is involved in setting their personal targets
- Ensure that looked after and previously looked after children are prioritised for 1:1 tuition wherever possible
- Take responsibility for developing and implementing PEPs
- Prepare an annual report for the Academy Committee or IMB. The information for this report should be gathered and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the students concerned. This report should:
    - Identify the number of looked after and previously looked after children on the school's roll
    - Record their attendance data
    - Record their progress data
    - Record their GCSE results and other qualifications received
    - Examine the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions received
    - Show the destination data for this cohort
- Attend LAC reviews to feedback on progress in school
- Report to Governors annually by compiling an LAC report

7.0 Staff Responsibilities

- Staff will be aware of looked after children and previously looked after children in their classes and provide them with support and encouragement.
- Staff will be vigilant for signs of bullying.
- Staff will promote the self-esteem of looked after children and previously looked after children.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC or previously LAC children's progress.
- Have high expectations of LAC and previously LAC children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.

- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour.
- Understand how important it is to see LAC and previously LAC 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 previously LAC status.
- Appreciate the central importance of the LAC child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported.
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Heads (VSH)s and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.
- For previously LAC children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

8.0 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Every looked after child must have a personal education plan (PEP), which is used to support the child in fulfilling their educational potential.

- Each student will have 3 PEP meetings per academic year
- LAC pupil premium funding is used to allocate resources to help students achieve the targets that have been set.
- The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for the child to enable them to make their expected progress.
- The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- All the relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and other teachers, will work with the child in creating the PEP.
- The PEP will reflect the requirements for the LA for the individual child.
- If a child is moving to a new school, transitional support will be provided and will be factored into their PEP.
- Support will be provided to help the child meet their aspirations, including:
- Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national curriculum key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
- Careers advice, guidance and financial information about further education, training and employment.
- The PEP will include extended services such as after school clubs, study support and leisure interests.
- Support will be provided for improving attendance and behaviour.

9.0 Commitment to Multiagency Working

- Each school is committed to the principles of multiagency working as set out in the statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Working together to safeguard children July 2018.
- Each school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded in a timely nature to the looked after children's social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- Each school will host the PEP and Review meetings, when this is appropriate for the child and the Virtual School.
- Each school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues.