

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

Springfields First School



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** Throughout this policy, the statutory terms "**Looked After Children (LAC)**" and "**Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)**" are used in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education guidance. The school recognises that many children and young people prefer alternative terms such as "**Children in Care**" and "**Care-Experienced Children and Young People**". Springfield's First School is committed to using respectful, inclusive and child-centred language that promotes dignity, belonging and a positive sense of identity, taking account of the views and preferences of individual children and young people.*

1. Policy Statement

At Springfield's First School, we want every looked after child (LAC) and previously looked after child (PLAC) to feel safe, valued and included, and to have the support and high-quality teaching they need to do well.

We understand that children who are, or have previously been, looked after may have experienced changes, loss, trauma, changes of school or carer, and difficulties with trust and relationships. We will take these experiences into account when supporting each child.

We know that children learn best when they feel safe, secure and supported, so we consider their emotional, social and pastoral needs alongside their learning.

Our approach is based on high expectations, positive relationships, safeguarding and emotional wellbeing. We use attachment aware, trauma informed, relational and restorative approaches to help children feel safe, understood and connected. We identify difficulties early, work closely with families and professionals, use the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and Staffordshire's e-PEP system, make appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus, monitor progress carefully and make sure the child's views are heard.

Being looked after or previously looked after will never be used as a reason to lower expectations. We will help each child to achieve their potential.

2. Aims

- Promote educational achievement, progress and wellbeing.
- Ensure high-quality teaching and appropriate support.
- Ensure looked after children have an up-to-date PEP.
- Ensure the child's views, wishes and feelings inform planning.
- Work effectively with carers, parents where appropriate, social workers, the Virtual School and other professionals.
- Identify barriers to learning early.
- Monitor attendance, attainment, progress, behaviour and participation.
- Use Pupil Premium Plus appropriately and in an evidence-informed manner.
- Identify and support SEND needs through the graduated approach.
- Support resilience, confidence, relationships and a sense of belonging.

- Provide appropriate support for children who have left care through adoption, Special Guardianship or relevant Child Arrangements Orders.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

Springfields First School will have regard to current legislation and statutory guidance relevant to looked after and previously looked after children.

This includes the Children Act 1989; Children and Families Act 2014; Education Act 2002; Equality Act 2010; Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014; Data Protection Act 2018; UK GDPR; Keeping Children Safe in Education; Working Together to Safeguard Children; Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children; statutory guidance for designated teachers; current Department for Education Pupil Premium guidance; and Staffordshire County Council Virtual School guidance and procedures.

The school will review this policy when relevant legislation or statutory guidance changes.

4. Definition of a Looked After Child

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority under relevant provisions of the Children Act 1989.

Children may be looked after through foster care, residential care or other approved arrangements. The school will work with the local authority responsible for the child.

5. Previously Looked After Children

For education and Pupil Premium purposes, a previously looked after child is generally a child who has left local authority care because they have been adopted, are subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), a relevant Child Arrangements Order (CAO), or an equivalent eligible arrangement.

Parents and carers can choose whether to tell the school that their child was previously looked after. Sharing this information helps us make sure the right support is available and may allow the school to access relevant Pupil Premium funding. We will treat this information sensitively and confidentially.

6. Designated Teacher

Springfields First School have a Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. The Designated Teacher will have sufficient authority and influence to ensure that this cohort remains a whole-school priority.

- Champion educational achievement and wellbeing.
- Act as the central school contact for LAC and PLAC matters.
- Monitor progress, attainment, attendance, behaviour and interventions.
- Coordinate and contribute to PEP meetings.
- Ensure PEP targets inform classroom provision.

- Liaise with social workers, carers, the Virtual School and other professionals.
- Ensure the child's voice is represented.
- Monitor Pupil Premium Plus and its impact.
- Work with the SENDCO where SEND needs are identified.
- Support transitions, records and staff training.

7. Headteacher

- Ensure statutory responsibilities are met.
- Support the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure LAC and PLAC remain a whole-school priority.
- Promote high expectations and effective provision.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Ensure governors receive suitable anonymised information.

8. Governing Body

- Ensure a Designated Teacher is appointed and supported.
- Monitor educational achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Monitor arrangements for PEPs and PLAC support.
- Monitor appropriate use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus.
- Maintain confidentiality when receiving information about individual children.

9. Staffordshire Virtual School

Springfields First School will work collaboratively with Staffordshire Virtual School and, where applicable, the Virtual School of the local authority responsible for the child.

The Virtual School may provide advice, challenge, PEP guidance, support with attendance and educational progress, advice regarding interventions and SEND, transition support, training and guidance concerning Pupil Premium Plus.

The school will seek advice where there are concerns about educational progress, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding or access to appropriate support.

10. Staffordshire e-PEP System

Where Staffordshire's arrangements apply, Springfields First School will use Staffordshire's e-PEP system to help us plan, record and review the education and support of looked after children.

The e-PEP will record relevant information including attainment and progress, attendance, strengths and interests, barriers to learning, the child's views, educational targets, interventions, support, agreed actions, responsible adults, timescales and Pupil Premium Plus planning.

The PEP is not just a form to complete. It is a working plan that helps everyone understand what the child needs and what we are going to do. Targets should be clear, measurable where appropriate, relevant and time-bound, and reviewed regularly.

Actions agreed through the PEP will inform day-to-day educational provision.

11. PEP Meetings

The school will contribute fully to PEP meetings and provide relevant information about attainment, progress, attendance, strengths, SEND, interventions, barriers to learning and next steps.

The child's views will be actively sought and represented.

The school will work with the child, carer, parent where appropriate, social worker, Virtual School, Designated Teacher, class teacher, SENDCO and other relevant professionals.

12. Pupil Premium Plus

Pupil Premium Plus is additional funding intended to help improve the educational outcomes of eligible looked after and previously looked after children.

For looked after children, the relevant Virtual School Head is responsible for decisions about the looked-after child Pupil Premium allocation, in consultation with the school. For previously looked after children, the school is responsible for using the funding in ways that meet the child's identified educational needs.

School processes will identify needs, plan support, record intended outcomes, monitor implementation, measure impact and review provision.

Pupil Premium Plus is not a personal cash budget for an individual child. It is funding that should be used appropriately to improve educational outcomes.

13. Educational Progress and Attainment

At Springfields First School, we want every looked after and previously looked after child to enjoy learning and make good progress. We will:

- Monitor reading, writing, mathematics, phonics and wider curriculum attainment.
- Monitor progress from appropriate starting points.
- Identify reasons for underachievement and implement support.
- Maintain high expectations for all children.

14. Attendance

Regular attendance is important because it gives children the best opportunity to learn, build friendships and feel part of school life. We will:

- Monitor attendance and patterns of absence.
- Communicate concerns promptly.
- Work with carers and relevant professionals.
- Identify and address barriers to attendance.
- Put appropriate support plans in place where required.

15. SEND

Some looked after children may have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) that have not yet been identified. We will look out for any concerns early and involve our SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) when appropriate.

We will follow the school's graduated approach to SEND support and review the help provided regularly. If a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the PEP will work alongside the EHCP; it does not replace it.

Where appropriate, we will use Staffordshire's Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review (EAPDR) pathway and other Staffordshire SEND arrangements to help us understand a child's needs and plan support.

EAPDR is a Staffordshire local support pathway rather than a legal requirement. A child does not have to complete EAPDR before a request for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) can be made if the legal criteria for an assessment may be met.

16. Emotional Wellbeing, Attachment and Trauma

Experiences before and during care may affect emotional regulation, relationships, trust, self-esteem, behaviour, concentration, learning, attendance and responses to change.

Staff will use an attachment-aware and trauma-informed approaches while maintaining high expectations.

Support may include predictable routines, consistent adults, visual timetables, advance warning of change, positive reinforcement, emotional regulation support, access to a trusted adult, planned transitions and restorative approaches.

Relational Practice

At Springfields First School, we recognise that positive relationships are central to children's emotional wellbeing and learning. Staff aim to build relationships based on trust, consistency, empathy, respect and clear boundaries.

Our relational approach recognises that behaviour is a form of communication and that children may sometimes need help to understand and regulate their emotions before they are ready to learn.

We use restorative approaches to help children understand the impact of their actions, repair relationships and rebuild trust following difficulties or conflict. Restorative conversations are used alongside clear expectations and appropriate consequences.

For children who are looked after or previously looked after, these approaches can be particularly important because previous experiences may affect their ability to trust adults, manage emotions or respond positively to boundaries and change.

Relational and restorative practice does not mean that expectations are lowered. Instead, children are supported to understand expectations, take responsibility for their actions and develop positive relationships with others.

17. Behaviour, Suspension and Exclusion

Before significant sanctions are considered, staff will think carefully about the child's individual circumstances. This includes possible unmet SEND needs, communication difficulties, emotional regulation, attachment and trauma, recent changes or disruption, placement instability, bullying and safeguarding concerns.

This does not stop the school responding appropriately to serious incidents. However, where behaviour suggests that a child needs additional help, we will seek support early and work with other professionals where appropriate.

18. Previously Looked After Children – Staffordshire EPPLAC

Springfields First School recognises Staffordshire's Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC). This is a simple planning and information-sharing document designed to help home, school and relevant professionals understand what helps the child to learn and thrive.

If parents or carers tell us that their child is previously looked after, we may use Staffordshire's EPPLAC process where this would be helpful.

An EPPLAC may look at the child's strengths, areas where they need support, emotional wellbeing, relationships, attachment, transitions, SEND, attainment, strategies that help them learn and, importantly, their own views.

We will keep the EPPLAC confidential and only share it with people who need the information to support the child. It does not replace other school plans, such as a SEND support plan or pastoral support plan.

19. Transition

Moving classes, schools or other changes may prove to be difficult for children who are looked after or previously looked after. We will:

- Plan transitions into school, between classes, between key stages and to new schools carefully.
- Provide relevant information securely and appropriately.
- Consider transitions following placement changes, adoption or Special Guardianship.
- Use the Designated Teacher to coordinate relevant educational information.

20. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

We understand that information about a child's care history is personal and sensitive. Springfields First School will:

- Treat LAC and PLAC information sensitively.
- Store records securely.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis.
- Follow UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding requirements.
- Do not identify children publicly as looked after or previously looked after.

21. The Child's Voice

The views, wishes and feelings of the child will be central to educational planning. Depending on their age and individual needs, children may be involved in:

- Setting PEP targets and reviews.
- Intervention planning.
- Transition planning.
- Identifying trusted adults.
- Identifying their own barriers to learning.
- Reviewing progress.

22. Staff Training

- Relevant staff will receive appropriate information and training regarding LAC and PLAC.
- Training may include attachment, trauma, relational and restorative practice, safeguarding, emotional regulation, emotion coaching, SEND, PEPs, Pupil Premium Plus and Staffordshire Virtual School arrangements.
- New staff will be made aware of the school's arrangements.

23. Monitoring and Evaluation

The school regularly monitors a range of information in relation to LAC and PLAC. We aim to build a picture of the whole child rather than looking only at academic results. The areas monitored are as follows:

Area	Monitoring
Attendance	Attendance and persistent absence
Progress	Academic progress from starting points
Attainment	Age-related expectations and individual targets
PEP	Quality, timeliness and impact
Interventions	Participation and measurable outcomes
SEND	Identification and effectiveness of provision
Behaviour	Patterns, incidents and exclusions
Wellbeing	Emotional and pastoral needs
Pupil Premium Plus	Planned expenditure and impact
Voice	Child participation in planning

Transition	Quality and effectiveness
Safeguarding	Emerging concerns and actions

24. Records

The school will maintain appropriate records including PEP/e-PEP information, EPPLAC documentation where used, attainment, progress, attendance, intervention records, Pupil Premium Plus information, SEND documentation, relevant correspondence and transition information.

We will keep records securely and in line with the school's data protection and record-retention procedures.

25. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Governing Body	Ensure statutory responsibilities are met; support the Designated Teacher; monitor outcomes and provision.
Headteacher	Provide strategic leadership; ensure whole-school commitment; support the Designated Teacher.
Designated Teacher	Champion LAC and PLAC; coordinate PEP/e-PEP arrangements; monitor progress, attendance and wellbeing; liaise with the Virtual School; monitor Pupil Premium Plus.
SENDCO	Coordinate SEND identification and provision and work closely with the Designated Teacher.
Class Teachers	Know the child's needs; provide high-quality teaching; implement agreed strategies; monitor progress; contribute to PEP reviews.
All Staff	Maintain high expectations; build positive relationships; follow safeguarding procedures; maintain confidentiality; raise concerns promptly.

26. Review of Policy

We will review this policy every year, or sooner if there are important changes to the law, Department for Education guidance, Staffordshire County Council or Virtual School arrangements, safeguarding requirements or Pupil Premium arrangements.

The policy will be reviewed by the Designated Teacher and Headteacher and presented to the Governing Body for approval.

27. How Parents and Carers Can Ask for Support

Parents and carers are welcome to talk to the school if they have concerns about a looked after or previously looked after child's learning, attendance, wellbeing, behaviour, SEND needs or transition. You can speak to your child's class teacher, the Designated Teacher, the SENDCO or Headteacher. We will listen, explain what support may be available and work with you and other relevant professionals to agree appropriate next steps.

Related School Policies and Documents

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; SEND Policy; Behaviour Policy; Attendance Policy; Equality Policy; Pupil Premium Strategy; Teaching and Learning Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Educational Visits Policy; Online Safety Policy; Data Protection and Privacy Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Accessibility Plan; Staffordshire Virtual School guidance; Staffordshire e-PEP guidance; Staffordshire EPPLAC guidance.