



Pirton Hill Primary School Looked After Children Policy (September 2026)

Originated by: C Ellis and C Keane
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1. Overarching Values

Expect:

*We all **expect** to work hard, and meet our own high expectations, in a safe environment with access to high quality resources and opportunities that broaden our horizons.*

Believe:

*We all **believe** in ourselves, and each other, and know that everyone has something special to contribute.*

Achieve:

*We all have the opportunity to **achieve**, and fulfil our potential, regardless of our backgrounds.*

Enjoy:

*We all strive to develop passionate and determined life-long learners who **enjoy** learning, understand how to progress and take pleasure in succeeding.*

2. Introduction

- **Policy objective:** To promote the educational achievement, inclusion, stability and welfare of children who are looked after (CLA/LAC) and children who were previously looked after (previously looked-after children; PLAC) on roll at Pirton Hill Primary School.
- At Pirton Hill Primary School we will ensure that children who are looked after and previously looked after have access to high-quality education and are prioritised for appropriate additional support. We will use Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) and other available resources strategically, in accordance with current Department for Education (DfE) and Luton Virtual School guidance, to remove barriers to learning and improve educational outcomes.
- We recognise that school can provide an important stable and consistent environment for children who are looked after. We promote whole-school understanding of attachment, trauma, loss, separation and the potential impact of care experience on learning, relationships, attendance and behaviour. Staff will support children sensitively, respectfully and confidentially, while maintaining high expectations.
- The school will work closely with the child, carers, parents where appropriate, social

worker, Virtual School and other relevant professionals. The child's wishes and feelings will be considered in educational planning and review.

3. Aims for LAC and PLAC:

- To provide a safe, secure and inclusive environment in which educational progress, emotional wellbeing and stability are central to planning.
- To identify and address barriers to learning early, with high expectations for progress and achievement.
- To use PP+ and other resources effectively to support identified educational and wellbeing needs, with clear outcomes and review arrangements.
- To ensure every looked-after child has an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP), reviewed termly as part of the child's care planning arrangements.
- To ensure the child's voice is sought and reflected in educational planning wherever appropriate.
- To provide sensitive, child-centred and relationship-based support, including access to a trusted adult where this is helpful.
- To ensure school systems facilitate discreet and respectful support and effective partnership working with carers and professionals.
- To ensure the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are explicitly considered within relevant school policies and procedures.
- To maintain clear boundaries and high expectations for behaviour while recognising that behaviour may communicate unmet need, distress or difficulty with self-regulation. Sanctions will not be used in a way that shames or ostracises a child.
- To ensure children who are looked after or previously looked after are encouraged and supported to participate fully in school life, including trips, clubs, leadership and enrichment opportunities.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

Headteacher and governing body

- Monitor the effectiveness of provision for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure the school has an appropriately trained Designated Teacher and that staff understand their responsibilities.
- Ensure the Governing Body receives appropriate information about the progress, attendance, inclusion and support of looked-after and previously looked-after children, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Ensure PP+ and other relevant resources are used effectively and their impact is evaluated.
- Support the Designated Teacher in accessing Luton Virtual School advice, training and networks.

Designated teacher

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After at Pirton Hill Primary School is Cristelle Ellis, Deputy Headteacher.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Promote the educational achievement and wellbeing of looked-after children and support the educational achievement of previously looked-after children.
- Ensure looked-after children have access to high-quality teaching and appropriate additional support.
- Track progress, attainment, attendance, participation and relevant wellbeing indicators, using appropriate school information and professional evidence.
- Coordinate and contribute to PEPs, ensuring targets are specific, measurable and reviewed.

- Ensure PEP actions are communicated to relevant staff and are implemented and reviewed.
- Work closely with the child, carer, social worker, Virtual School and other professionals.
- Ensure PP+ is used strategically, linked to identified needs and reviewed for impact.
- Liaise with the school's allocated Luton Virtual School adviser and access advice, training and support when required.
- Develop and maintain expertise in attachment-aware and trauma-informed practice.
- Promote a culture of high expectations, inclusion, aspiration and positive relationships.
- Advise colleagues on the educational implications of care experience and help staff respond sensitively to individual need.
- Ensure looked-after and previously looked-after children are not overlooked for opportunities, responsibilities or enrichment because of their care status.
- Contribute to relevant safeguarding, SEND, attendance, behaviour and transition planning.
- Report appropriately to the Headteacher and Governing Body on progress, provision, resource needs and staff development, while protecting individual confidentiality.

All staff:

- Read and understand this policy and relevant school procedures.
- Provide accurate information to the Designated Teacher when requested.
- Maintain high expectations and provide quality-first teaching.
- Implement agreed PEP targets and strategies consistently.
- Be alert to the possible impact of loss, separation, trauma and care experience on learning, relationships, attendance and behaviour.
- Maintain confidentiality and share information only where there is a legitimate educational, safeguarding or professional reason to do so.
- Seek advice from the Designated Teacher, SENCO or Designated Safeguarding Lead when concerns arise.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

The PEP is part of the child's overall care plan. Luton Virtual School guidance states that PEPs should be initiated by the social worker and developed and reviewed in partnership with the relevant professionals, including the child, carer, Designated Teacher and Virtual School.

Pirton Hill Primary School will:

- Participate fully in termly PEP meetings and preparation.
- Ensure educational information is accurate, current and evidence-based.
- Identify the child's strengths, interests, views, educational needs, barriers and agreed targets.
- Agree appropriate provision, interventions and responsibilities, with clear intended outcomes.
- Ensure attachment, trauma, emotional wellbeing, SEND and attendance needs are considered where relevant.
- Review progress against previous targets and adjust provision where necessary.
- Ensure agreed actions are followed through between PEP meetings.
- Record and monitor the use and impact of PP+ in line with current Luton Virtual School arrangements.

Luton Virtual School states that PEPs should be reviewed each school term and should identify educational needs and developmental needs linked to attachment and trauma where relevant.

6. Attendance:

The school will promote regular attendance and address attendance barriers promptly and sensitively. Attendance procedures will be applied in accordance with the current DfE statutory guidance, Working together to improve school attendance, and the school's Attendance Policy.

- Monitor attendance and punctuality closely.
- Consider the individual circumstances and barriers affecting a looked-after child's attendance.
- Work with the child, carer, social worker and Virtual School where attendance concerns arise.
- Use early support and appropriate adjustments to address barriers before difficulties become entrenched.
- Escalate concerns through the appropriate school and local authority processes when support has not resolved the issue.
- Ensure attendance information contributes to PEP review and wider care planning where relevant.

The DfE's attendance guidance was updated in July 2026 and remains statutory for schools and local authorities.

7. Admissions/ Transitions:

The school will support educational stability and minimise disruption when a looked-after child joins, leaves or moves school.

- Prioritise looked-after children for admission in accordance with the applicable admissions arrangements.
- Work promptly with Luton Virtual School, the social worker, carer and previous/new school to secure an appropriate placement and transfer information.
- Provide a structured school-entry or transition plan where appropriate.
- Identify a trusted adult/key member of staff and, where helpful, a peer buddy.
- Share relevant educational information securely and lawfully.
- Plan additional support around significant transitions, including changes of placement, class, teacher or school.
- Use sensitive and planned approaches to endings and goodbyes where appropriate, recognising the potential impact of loss and disrupted attachments.

Luton Virtual School states that looked-after children are prioritised for school places and that, when a move is anticipated, the education coordinator should be informed promptly so education and placement planning can happen together. In emergency placements, Luton states that a suitable education placement should be secured within 20 school days.

8. Additional Educational Needs and SEND:

Looked-after and previously looked-after children may have additional educational needs, including gaps in learning, SEND or needs associated with trauma and attachment. The school will ensure that care experience does not lower expectations.

- Provide high-quality teaching and targeted support based on assessed need.
- Prioritise appropriate additional support where this is necessary to meet need, even where a child does not meet a particular intervention threshold.
- Coordinate interventions and ensure teaching to agreed plans is systematic.
- Monitor and review progress regularly.

- Ensure any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has appropriate teacher oversight.
- Work closely with the SENCO where a child has SEND.
- Ensure statutory SEND processes, including EHC plan reviews where applicable, are completed in a timely manner with relevant professionals involved.

9. Safeguarding and confidentiality:

All looked-after and previously looked-after children remain subject to the school's safeguarding arrangements. Staff will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- Staff will remain alert to safeguarding concerns and changes in presentation, attendance, behaviour or relationships.
- The Designated Teacher will work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where safeguarding concerns affect or involve a child.
- Information about a child's care status will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.
- The school will seek to ensure that children are not publicly identified as looked after or previously looked after.

10. Pupil premium Plus (PP+)

PP+ will be used strategically to improve educational outcomes and remove identified barriers to learning. It will not be treated as an automatic entitlement to a particular individual intervention.

- Link PP+ spending to identified educational needs and agreed outcomes.
- Record intended outcomes and review the impact of interventions.
- Consider evidence from assessment, PEPs, attendance, SEND information and the child's views when deciding how resources are used.
- Use Luton Virtual School processes when seeking additional funding or specialist support.
- Ensure spending supports educational progress, inclusion, wellbeing and access to learning rather than simply replacing existing universal provision.

Luton Virtual School currently advises schools that additional PP+ funding requests are considered through the PEP process and that schools should demonstrate effective prior use of their existing allocation. Current funding arrangements should be checked against the latest DfE and Luton Virtual School information at the point of allocation

11. Alternative Provision:

Alternative provision will only be used where it is appropriate to the child's needs and in accordance with current statutory guidance and local arrangements.

- The child's educational placement and responsibility will be clear and documented.
- The arrangement will be reflected in the child's PEP where relevant.
- The provision will be suitable, appropriately supervised and of sufficient quality and duration to meet the child's educational needs.
- The school will maintain appropriate oversight of progress, attendance, safeguarding and reintegration where applicable.

- The school will work with the Virtual School and other professionals to ensure the arrangement supports educational stability and progress.

12. Suspension and permanent exclusion:

The school recognises the particular importance of educational stability for children who are looked after. Suspension or permanent exclusion will be considered only in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and the current DfE statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion.

- Before a suspension or permanent exclusion decision is made, the school will consider the child's individual circumstances, including care status, SEND, safeguarding, trauma, attachment and any relevant barriers to behaviour and learning.
- The school will consider whether reasonable adjustments, additional support or alternative strategies are appropriate.
- Where appropriate, the Designated Teacher will be involved and the Virtual School will be consulted, particularly where exclusion may affect educational stability.
- If suspension occurs, the school will follow the current legal requirements for education during suspension and work with relevant professionals to support a successful return.
- Permanent exclusion will be used only where lawful and in accordance with current statutory guidance.

Luton Virtual School advises that exclusion of a looked-after child should be a last option and that it can provide support and advice regarding exclusions. The current national statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion was updated in July 2026.

13. Multi-Agency Working:

The school will build positive, purposeful relationships with professionals involved in the child's care and education. This may include the child, carer, social worker, Virtual School, SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead, health professionals, educational psychology and other appropriate services.

- Share relevant information lawfully and proportionately.
- Attend and contribute to meetings and reviews where educational input is required.
- Ensure agreed actions are clear, owned and reviewed.
- Raise concerns promptly where educational stability, attendance, safeguarding or progress is at risk.
- Promote joined-up planning around transitions and changes in care placement.

14. Previously looked after children

The school will provide appropriate support to children who are no longer looked after but who meet the definition of previously looked-after children, including children who have been adopted, or who are subject to a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order following a period in care.

- Support the child's educational achievement and wellbeing.
- Consider the impact of previous care experience where relevant to the child's needs.
- Work sensitively with parents, carers or guardians and respect confidentiality.
- Ensure eligible children can access PP+ in line with current national arrangements and appropriate evidence of eligibility.
- Ensure the Designated Teacher contributes to relevant planning and support.

- Luton Virtual School confirms that PP+ is available to eligible previously looked-after children and sets out the evidence families may be asked to provide. Current funding rates should be checked against the latest DfE guidance.

15. Training and continuous improvement

The school will ensure that the Designated Teacher accesses appropriate training and keeps knowledge current. Staff training will be provided where identified through individual need, policy review, safeguarding learning, PEPs, local training or changes in statutory guidance.

Luton Virtual School offers designated teacher training, network sessions and trauma and attachment training for education settings.

16. Monitoring, review and governance

- The Designated Teacher will monitor the progress, attendance, provision and participation of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor the effectiveness of the school's arrangements and the impact of PP+.
- Individual information will be shared with governors only where appropriate and in a way that protects confidentiality.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or Luton Virtual School procedures.

17. Associated documentation and website links:

School policies and documents:

- Pirton Hill Primary School Special Educational Needs Policy and Information Report
- Pirton Hill Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Pirton Hill Primary School Attendance Policy
- Pirton Hill Primary School Behaviour Policy
- Pirton Hill Primary School Accessibility Policy
- Pirton Hill Primary School Pupil Premium Policy
- Pirton Hill Primary School Teaching and Learning Policy

External guidance and local information:

- **Luton Virtual School**
<https://www.luton.gov.uk/schools-education/virtual-school-children-care>
- **Luton Virtual School – Designated Teachers**
<https://www.luton.gov.uk/schools-education/virtual-school-children-care/designated-teachers-virtual-schools>
- **Luton Virtual School – Personal Education Plans**
<https://www.luton.gov.uk/schools-education/virtual-school-children-care/personal-educational-plans-looked-after-children>
- **Luton Virtual School – Admissions for looked-after children**
<https://www.luton.gov.uk/schools-education/virtual-school-children-care/admission-education-provisions-looked-after-children>
- **Luton Virtual School – Previously looked-after children**
<https://www.luton.gov.uk/schools-education/virtual-school-children-care/previously-looked-after-children-information-educational-settings>
- **DfE – Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>
- **DfE – Working together to improve school attendance**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- **DfE – School suspensions and permanent exclusions**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions>
- **DfE – Keeping children safe in education**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>
- **DfE – Pupil premium**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2025-to-2026>