



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

## Children Looked After Policy

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Spring 2024

*Review date: Spring 2026*

# CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER POLICY

This Policy is a Category 1 Policy (Full Delegation)

This policy is in force until further notice from:	Spring 2024
This policy must be reviewed by no later than*: <i>*this refers to the term in which the Policy must be reviewed by the appropriate Committee for recommendation to the Board.</i>	Spring 2026
Policy Author(s):	Education Director
Date policy reviewed by Committee and Minute reference	Learning, Teaching & Standards Committee: 15.01.24 (Minute reference 59)
Date Policy approved by the Trust Board and Minute reference	07.02.24 (Minute reference 59)
Location of publication of policy:	Governor Hub/ AST Website/ Internal Records and Intranet

## 1. National Context

- 1.1. Nationally, Children Looked After (CLA) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Children Looked After are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and achieve economic well-being.

Helping Children Looked After to succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for our MAT. This policy takes account of:

- The duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).
- Prompting the Education of Looked After Children: Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014.
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfE's guidance to Governing Bodies (*Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors*).

- 1.2. Our approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children Looked After is underpinned by The Avanti Way as follows:

### Fidelity to The Avanti Way

#### Empowering Choice:

- Our ambition is to give children in care a sense of agency and autonomy over their lives. This includes making provisions that encourage children to actively participate in decision-making processes related to their education, activities and daily routines.
- We want to actively provide opportunities for children to express their preferences and make choices based on their interests and needs should be embedded in the policy.

#### Strengthening Interconnection:

- We must commit to creating and maintaining strong connections between Children Looked After, their caregivers, and the broader community. This will involve promoting regular and meaningful communication between children and their carers and encouraging positive relationships with peers.
- We need to promote activities that foster a sense of community, such as group events and collaborative projects.

### Enriching Diversities:

- We should seek to emphasise the importance of recognising and celebrating diversity in all its forms, including cultural, ethnic, religious, and individual differences. This may include strategies for providing culturally sensitive care that respects and honours the unique backgrounds of each child.

### Expanding Purpose:

- We must seek to develop strategies to help children in care develop a sense of purpose and direction in their lives. This may involve supporting educational and vocational goals, providing exposure to various experiences, and encouraging exploration of personal interests.

### Nourishing Loving Relationships:

- We will ensure that we promote secure attachments between children and their caregivers, as well as encouraging positive interactions with peers, teachers, and other significant individuals in the child's life.
- We will prioritise support mechanisms for building and maintaining healthy relationships, such as counselling services and training for caregivers.

## **2. Supporting Children Looked After**

- 2.1. We will ensure that Children Looked After are prioritised in each school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006. (These require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to CLA in their oversubscription criteria).
- 2.2. Ensure a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below:
  - Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented, and regularly reviewed every 6 months for every Child Looked After.
  - Identify a member of the School Stakeholder Committee (SSC) as Designated person for Children Looked After.
- 2.3. Our schools will champion the needs of Children Looked After, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

### 3. Responsibilities

#### 3.1. Responsibilities of the Principal:

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Children Looked After and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children Looked After to be included in the termly Principals' data reports and analysis. OFSTED now select a number of Children Looked After, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that all SSCs are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children Looked After.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Children Looked After.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

#### 3.2. The Role of the Designated Teacher:

The Designated Teacher should be *"someone with sufficient authority to make things happen... (who) should be an advocate for Children Looked After, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them."* DfE Guidance.

This person will ideally be a member of the SLT and will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and the Virtual School.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each Child Looked After has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes. *Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.*

- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the Child Looked After that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Encourage Children Looked After to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and SSC, raising their awareness of the needs of Children Looked After.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that a high number of Children Looked After say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance of each Child Looked After on the school roll is reported to Welfare call each day.
- Raise awareness in secondary schools that Children Looked After are automatically entitled to an allowance (the Bursary) if they go into the Sixth Form.

### 3.3. Responsibilities for All Staff:

All our staff in Avanti Schools will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children Looked After, as for all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality with regard to Children Looked After and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- 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.
- Work to enable Children Looked After to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Children Looked After.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Children Looked After.

- Be aware that many Children Looked After say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's Policy.

The Principal will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

#### 3.4. Responsibility of the SSC:

Identify a nominated SSC for Children Looked After.

#### 3.5. Responsibilities of the Trust Board:

The Trust Board will:

- Monitor the academic progress of Children Looked After, through mandatory termly reports.
- Ensure that Children Looked After 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 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 his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Principal, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children Looked After are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year from each school setting out:
  - a) The number of looked-after pupils on the School's roll (if any).
  - b) Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
  - c) Their SAT scores, GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
  - d) The number of suspensions and permanent exclusions (if any).
  - e) The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
  - f) The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.