Children Who Are Looked After Policy

Updated for:	September 2026
Next review:	September 2027

James Montgomery Academy Trust

Children Who Are Looked After Policy

1. Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after children are of real concern. Children and young people who are looked after require special treatment and targeted support and intervention in their favour in order to improve their situation.

The James Montgomery Academy Trust (JMAT) endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, continuity and individual care and attention for all our children. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage children 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 children 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 children develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

This policy should be read alongside: Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) — current statutory edition and Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE) 2026. The school will update this policy as soon as the DfE publishes new statutory guidance.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation/statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989 (Sections 20 and 31)
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) - current statutory edition and we will update as soon as the 2026 KCSIE is published/confirmed
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (DfE)
- Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (DfE)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Statutory Guidance)

JMAT ensures all staff have regard to these requirements when supporting CLA and PLAC pupils.

3. Definitions

Children and young people who are looked after are defined as, children or young people who are subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989 (sections 20 and 31).

This definition applies to children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.

If a child is subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, they are classed as looked after, since the LA has parental responsibility.

Children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents, are regarded as looked after.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are defined as:

Children who are no longer looked after because they are:

- Subject to an Adoption Order
- Subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Subject to a Child Arrangements Order (residence)
- Adopted from state care outside England and Wales

Support for PLAC is delivered in partnership with parents/carers and with their consent.

4. Safeguarding Principles

The school's safeguarding and CLA responsibilities are led by named staff. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mrs Fenton Deputy DSL(s): Mrs Roberts & Mr Tomlinson. Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DT): Mrs Bradley

In any case where bullying, neglect, abuse or other concerns indicate a safeguarding risk, staff must report immediately to the DSL or a deputy using the school's normal reporting routes. Where the DSL judges that an incident meets the threshold for a multi-agency referral, they will act in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and local authority referral pathways and will make a referral to children's social care without delay where there is a risk of significant harm. Where criminality is suspected or there is an immediate threat to safety, the DSL will consider contacting the police in accordance with local protocols. All escalation decisions and timescales will be recorded on the pupil's safeguarding record.

JMAT recognises that:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- CLA are at heightened risk of:
    - Abuse and neglect
    - Mental health difficulties
    - Exploitation
    - Poor attendance and exclusion

All staff will:

- Maintain a child-centred approach
- Act in line with KCSIE 2025
- Ensure early identification and early help intervention
- Work collaboratively with safeguarding partners

5. Personal education plans (PEPs)

Every child who is looked after must have a personal education plan (PEP), which is used to support the child in fulfilling their educational potential. PEPs will be completed or reviewed at least once each term and within 10 working days of a pupil becoming looked after.

PEPs will: record the pupil's current attainment and barriers, set clear short-term and long-term education and wellbeing targets, specify the precise, quantifiable provision (including frequency and who will deliver it), name required staff training and list measurable success indicators.

Where PP+ is allocated, the PEP will record the exact intended use of the funding, the lead staff member responsible for delivery, start/end dates for provision and the expected impact measures.

The Designated Teacher will ensure PP+ spend is reviewed at each PEP review and that evidence of impact (attainment checks, attendance data, wellbeing notes and intervention records) is recorded and retained in the pupil's file. PEP documentation and associated evidence will be stored securely in the agreed central system and be available to the Virtual School Head, social worker and appropriate staff as required.

6. School attendance and behaviour support

The school will ensure robust monitoring of attendance and provide appropriate support for behaviour and SEND in line with the DfE statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026. In doing so, staff will consider behaviour within the context of attachment, trauma and the child's care experiences, recognising that emotional and relational factors often underpin behavioural presentation. Staff will understand that there is a possible high-risk for exclusion and require preventative strategies. This reflects DfE guidance emphasising the need for sensitive, well-informed behaviour support for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

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.

7. The designated teacher

Under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, all maintained schools are required to have a designated teacher for children who are looked after. The Designated Teacher must be a qualified teacher and must work closely with the Virtual School Head.

The primary duty of the designated teacher is to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after at the school. It is the responsibility of the Trust to ensure the designated teacher has received adequate training for the role. The designated teacher must submit an annual report to the headteacher which details the progress of children who are looked after.

The designated teacher will:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensure the child is involved in setting their targets.
- Advise staff on teaching strategies for looked after children.
- Ensure that looked after children are prioritised for 1 – 1 tuition.
- Take responsibility for developing and implementing PEPs.
- Make careful considerations to attachment and trauma where needed.

- Ensure that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Ensure Early help is timely and effective.
- Make staff aware of the possible link between the vulnerability of children who are looked and safeguarding risk.

8. Communicating with agencies

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the looked after children's social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers. Information sharing must follow KCSIE (latest guidance) and GDPR principles.

The school will co-ordinate their review meetings, for example, hold their annual review of looked after children with their statutory care review.

The school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues.

9. Local Advisory Board (LAB) responsibilities

- Appoint a Designated Teacher
- Monitor outcomes for CLA and PLAC pupils
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance
- Receive an annual report on:
    - Progress and attainment
    - Attendance
    - Use of PP+

10. Headteacher responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the headteacher to oversee this policy and monitor its implementation.
- The headteacher will make all members of staff aware that the support of children who are looked after is a key priority.
- The headteacher will allow the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- The headteacher will lead in actively challenging negative stereotypes of children who are looked after.
- Ensuring PP+ is managed effectively and accountably to support progress, attainment and well-being of children who are looked after (in line with DfE guidance).
- Ensure that the LAB receive annual report on outcomes for CLA and previously CLA from the designated teacher to monitor effectiveness of provision.

11. All staff responsibilities

- Staff will be aware of children who are looked after in their classes and provide them with support and encouragement.
- Staff will receive regular CPD to support trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice.
- Staff will preserve confidentiality and show sensitivity and understanding.
- Staff will be vigilant for signs of bullying
- Staff will promote the self-esteem of children who are looked after.

12. DSL responsibilities:

- Keeping up-to-date records of CLA's respective social worker and the Virtual School.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.
- Ensure documents are shared with relevant agencies.
- Where a child moves schools, the DSL is responsible for transfer of files within 5 days in line with KCSIE (latest guidance).

13. SENDCo responsibilities:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CLA and previously looked after.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-CLA.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained and informed.
- Interact with mental health services if needed.
- Ensuring that all CLA records are logged onto the child's chronology on RecordMy

14. Monitoring, evaluation and policy review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the JMAT schools. It will be assessed for its implementation and effectiveness annually. All CLA records will be stored and shared in line with the school's Data Protection Policy and GDPR.

15. Document history

Previous versions archived in accordance with document retention requirements.

Issue	Author/ Owner	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Approved by A&R Committee (date)	Comments/ Changes
V1	JMAT	July 2025	PRG	08/07/25	• Change of governor to advisory board member. • Inclusion of Trauma Informed practice.
V2	JMAT	July 2026	PRG	09/07/26	• Section 2 Legal Framework updated. • Section 5 School Attendance and Behaviour Support updated.

Key:
PRG – Policy Review Group
A & R Committee – Audit and Risk Committee