Malden Oaks
School & Tuition service

Making the MOST of everyday

Looked After Children and Children Previously Looked After Policy

Status	Non-statutory
Review Frequency	Annual
Last Reviewed	Autumn 2026
Next Review Due	Autumn 2027
Responsible for review	DSL
Approval by	Senior Leadership Team

In developing and reviewing this policy, the school has had regard to the following legislation and guidance, together with other relevant considerations:

Legislation	• Children Act 1989 Section 22 • Children Act 2004 Section 52 • Children and Social Work Act 2017
Official Guidance	• *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* • *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children* (DfE) • *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children* (DfE)

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1. Introduction

Malden Oaks has achieved the Attachment Aware Schools Award in recognition of its good practice in relation to students who are currently, or who have previously been looked after. We are an attachment aware and trauma informed school committed to promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children. We understand that these students' needs are best supported with high quality teaching from teachers they have been able to build positive relationships with, under a whole school approach that is attachment aware and trauma informed.

Malden Oaks focuses on what students can do and building their resilience. Through The 4 As; Attachment; Autonomy; Altruism and Achievement, we seek to support our students into developing into well rounded, resilient learners who are ready for the next stage of their education. Malden Oaks doesn't dwell on what went wrong yesterday and each student is afforded a fresh start every day where they can go on to experience or learn something new. Through emotion coaching, we support students to better understand their emotions and what their behaviour is communicating. We do not operate a rewards and sanctions system, rather, we focus on creating a positive and safe learning environment for our students where they can measure their own progress and we can recognise and celebrate their achievements with them. Positive relationships underpin all aspects of our practice.

Malden Oaks has a number of experienced and senior members of staff who support Looked After Children. Ayse Meliz oversees the support on offer across the various Malden Oaks sites as the Designated Teacher (DT). In the first instance, contact the Head of School for the provision the child attends; they will be able to tell you whether they or one of their deputies are the child's CLA Lead and oversee the day to day responsibilities for the DT role. If you are unsure which provision to contact, Ayse can be reached on stamz@maldenoaks.rbksch.org

Further details about the responsibilities of various staff can be found in the Roles & Responsibilities table.

Roles & Responsibilities		
Provision	**Head of School**	**Contact**
Surbiton	Sarah Bann	0203 137 2674 stsb@maldenoaks.rbksch.org
Ham	Carly Briggs	0208 289 4664 stcbr@maldenoaks.rbksch.org
6Oaks	Bryan Molin	0208 289 4664| stbm@maldenoaks.rbksch.org
Kingston	Sarah Pfutzner	07496 250848 | stns@maldenoaks.rbksch.org
Hampton Hill	Nicky McLachlan	07852327846 | stnm@maldenoaks.rbksch.org

This policy takes account of:

- Children Act 1989 Section 22
- Children Act 2004 Section 52
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*
- *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children* (DfE)
- *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children* (DfE)

Malden Oaks Policies that might also be relevant are:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Relationships and Communication Policy

2. Definitions

Children Looked After (CLA)
Children Looked After are children who are in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, as defined by

section 22 of the Children Act 1989.

Children may become looked after in a number of circumstances, including:

- children accommodated by the local authority by agreement with their parents or others with parental responsibility, under section 20 of the Children Act 1989;
- children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38);
- children accommodated by the local authority in circumstances involving police protection or other emergency arrangements, including those under sections 44 and 46; and
- children who are accommodated by the local authority in connection with remand or certain criminal justice arrangements, under section 21.

Children Looked After may live in a range of settings, including foster care, kinship/connected-person placements, children's homes or other arrangements made by the local authority. Being looked after is therefore a legal status rather than a description of where a child lives.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are those who have at one time in their lives been looked after by a local authority. They may have returned to their families or have been adopted.

Virtual schools exist nationally to champion the education of children in care and previously looked after children and support a wide range of partners. They are responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of Children Looked After and previously looked-after children.

Virtual school headteachers are local authority officers responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. They are responsible for ensuring that the educational achievement of children looked after and previously looked after children is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibility for promoting their welfare.

AfC Virtual School monitors the educational progress of all Kingston, Richmond and Windsor & Maidenhead children in care whether they attend schools in or out of borough, as if they were attending a single school. More information about Kingston & Richmond's virtual school can be found here https://www.afcvirtualschool.org.uk/

At Malden Oaks, the **Designated Teacher (DT)** is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The purpose of the Designated Teacher is to promote the educational achievement and wellbeing of children who are looked after by the local authority. It is important that the student knows and feels comfortable with this person and so it is more appropriate for either the Head of School or one of their deputies to take on the day to day responsibilities of the DT role, whilst any whole school or strategic responsibilities remain with the DT. When the HOS or their deputies (who are also DDSLs) take on this role, they are known as **CLA Leads**.

Children Looked After have termly **PEP- Personal Education Plan**- meetings. At Malden Oaks, CLA Leads chair these meetings, which are also attended by the student, carer, social worker, Virtual School and any other relevant stakeholders. The PEP is a record of the child's education and forms part of the overall Care Plan. It provides a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision to ensure their academic progress. The PEP document should set clear objectives or targets which relate to academic achievement as well as out of school activities and wherever necessary any developmental targets. The PEP is also where the Pupil Premium funding for students is allocated. If a child moves school, the PEP should be forwarded, as a matter of urgency, to the new school when known.

In relation to Previously Looked After Children, although they no longer require a PEP, the Designated Teacher, Head of School and/ or CLA Lead should continue to consider their educational needs.

3. Education of Children Looked After and Previously Looked after Children

All students who attend Malden Oaks have faced barriers to their learning and had a disjointed experience through education. In addition to their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, they may have experienced a sense of rejection, had to say goodbye to friends and teachers they'd established positive relationships with and/or missed out on learning opportunities.

For students who fall into either CLA or PLAC categories, these circumstances may exacerbate an already difficult situation outside of school. These barriers to learning can lead to poorer outcomes for students in these categories and it is vital schools recognise the importance of ensuring these students are supported appropriately so as to be able to have the same opportunities and successes as their peers. Students in the CLA or PLAC categories are at greater risk of exclusion and becoming NEET.

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. Malden Oaks takes this responsibility very seriously and is committed to ensuring that appropriate support is provided to students in these categories to ensure positive outcomes for them.

Support for these students and their carers/families is always personalised and child centred to ensure it is relevant, appropriate and effective.

We work closely with the Virtual School and other agencies to maintain existing positive relationships and make best use of any and all support available to these students.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Management Committee	• To ensure the Committee has a named member responsible for looked after children. It is currently Stuart Holmes • To be aware of how many Children Looked After are on roll at our school- reported on in the termly Safeguarding Report • To ensure that there is a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After • To support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff to ensure the needs of this group are met and that the school is an attachment aware, inclusive learning environment. • Attend relevant training • To annually review the effective implementation of this policy
Headteacher	• Identify a Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC • Support an attachment aware and trauma informed school, promoting high quality, inclusive teaching • Ensure cover arrangements are put in place should the Designated Teacher not be available to carry out these legal duties • Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission, progress, attendance of LAC and PLAC and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations • Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance • Ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy. These duties are delegated to the Designated teacher • Allocate resources to meet the needs of CLA • Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support the needs of CLA/ PLAC students and are in line with the school's attachment aware, trauma informed practice.

Designated Teachers	• To act as an advocate for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children • To champion an attachment aware and trauma informed school, promoting high quality, inclusive teaching. • To ensure all staff are aware of the barriers for looked after children and understand the need for systems and strategies to support them e.g. pre and over learning, emotion coaching, safe place to be etc • To ensure that they are aware of children who are previously looked after, including those who have a Special Guardianship Order, to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of previously looked-after children. This should include promoting good practice, identifying and meeting their needs, and guidance on effective use of the PPG. • To report to the Management Committee annually on the outcomes of Looked After Children. • To attend Designated Teacher forum and training and disseminate this information to the wider school community and maintain a good knowledge of research recommendations for this group.

CLA /PLAC Leads	• To champion an attachment aware and trauma informed approach , promoting high quality, inclusive teaching in their provision • To act as an advocate for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After in their provision • To ensure that the educational achievement of each looked after child in their provision is monitored, tracked, promoted and where relevant accelerated • To track and monitor attendance of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children • To liaise with other relevant professions in the network around the child. For example; social worker, foster carer, independent reviewing officer. • To chair PEP meetings for all Looked After Children each term having gathered progress updates from across the staff. • To advise on the most effective use of the Pupil Premium+ in liaison with relevant professionals in the PEP meeting . • To set learning based targets for students at PEP meetings and ensure these are implemented to a high standard and in time frame • To have a good working knowledge of the SEND code of practice • To ensure all staff are aware of the barriers for looked after children and understand the need for systems and strategies to support them e.g. pre and over learning, emotion coaching, safe place to be etc • To ensure that they are aware of children who are previously looked after, including those who have a Special Guardianship Order, to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of previously looked-after children. This should include promoting good practice, identifying and meeting their needs, and guidance on effective use of the PPG.

All Staff	• To work within the framework of an attachment aware and trauma informed school. • To ensure that CLA & PLAC students are supported sensitively and confidentiality is maintained. • To support students with their emotional development through strategies such as emotion coaching • To be familiar with this policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings • To have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children with an aim to close the attainment gap between this group and their peers • To attend any training offered in relation to Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children and apply techniques to include looked after and previously looked after children within the lessons and school community.