



Children Looked After Policy

Ratified: February 2025
Chair of Governors: Marie Linnane
Review: February 2028

Policy Objective:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PLA) on the roll of this school.

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLA

Wendy Wing - Headteacher

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and PLA

Tracy Farmer

Introduction

At Cuffley School we create an environment where Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the '*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children*'. (28th February 2018)

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for CLA and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise. We understand the need to work in a 'relationship-based' way so that children looked after and previously looked after feel valued and a part of our school community.

Our aim is to champion the needs of CLA to ensure they make rapid educational and social progress during their period in care on roll at Cuffley School.

Children Looked After may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour issues
- poor attachments to others
- have a need to be very private

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. The Governing Body of Cuffley School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible.

Equality and Diversity statement

This policy is intended to be helpful for improvement in the education opportunities provided for all learners but has a focus on Children Looked After who, statistically, experience disadvantage in education. The criteria are clear that the expectation is that all learners receive a high-quality, ambitious education; that providers are inclusive of all learners; and that all providers meet their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010 and all protected characteristics therein.

An inclusive learning environment in which everybody is respected is conducive to a happy and healthy learning environment.

Our Aims for CLA:

- To provide a safe and secure environment where educational progress and stability is always central to planning and all adults understand the specific needs of CLA and PLA
- To narrow the gap between the attainment of CLA and PLA and their peers, ensuring **accelerated** and **rapid** progress
- To ensure that CLA/PLA benefit from school-based interventions, even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*) and to use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- To enable all CLA to have a minimum of three Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*)
- To support all adults in providing sensitive, child-led support, adopting a relationship based approach and with at least one key adult with whom the child or young person has a trusted relationship and who will act as an advocate for them and take a special interest in their progress in all school activities.
- To facilitate discrete support, that includes a strong relationship between schools staff, carers and children looked after on roll.
- To ensure that CLA will be advantaged within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018.*) **Links to other relevant school policies: Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Admissions Policy and Attendance Policy.**
- To enable CLA and their foster families to feel part of the school community. They will be actively welcomed into the community in recognition of the particular needs of this group (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*).

Educational Planning for Children Looked After

Personal Education Plans (ePEP) and CLA Self Evaluation Forms (CLASEF):

The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals. The school will complete the CLASEF to inform the Hertfordshire Virtual School of the school's policy and practice, to account for the efficient and effective spend of the PP+ funding and to inform the school Governing Body [through](#) the annual report.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role. They will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all

CLA and PLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that all school staff receive appropriate and timely training.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is Wendy Wing; she is the Headteacher and a qualified teacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA by:

- ensuring that the CLA or PLA has access to quality first teaching
- tracking the progress of CLA and PLA across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book looks
- ensuring that the PP+ funding is used effectively and efficiently
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA
- providing and attending training and offering advice to all school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for CLA and PLA
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of CLA and PLA and school resource and staff training needs for working with this group
- prioritising CLA for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*).
- ensuring that CLA and PLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- completing the annual Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for each CLA as requested, to inform their annual CLA health review.

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA by:

- reading the 'school policy' and 'school policy guidance document' for CLA
- attending training, as appropriate
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher
- referring to the Designated Teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating an attachment and trauma-informed 'CLA-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for CLA by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available.

Attendance:

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of CLA and PLA to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as early intervention is important, as outlined in the Attendance Policy.

Admissions/ Transitions:

School procedures to support CLA during admission and transition include:

- prioritising CLA and PLA at the point of admission
- swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support and planning for CLA and PLA at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss.

Additional Educational Needs:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and PLA with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria (*in line with the DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*).
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight (*in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09*)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress for each academic year, as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, ePEP and CLASEF.

Special Educational Needs:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA who have special educational needs by:

- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year (*in line with the expectation set out in the ePEP and CLA-SEF*)
- ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision (*in line with the SEN Code of Practice*)
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight.

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CLA by familiarising themselves with the 'School Policy Guidance for Children in Care' and following the school's Child Protection Policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' (All staff) September 2018, if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Alternative Provision:

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision alternative to daily attendance at school will be:

- a plan that will retain the CLA on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for essential reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall ePEP for the child
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the CLA or PLA
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that ePEPs will include the school and the alternative provider.

Exclusion:

We have reviewed the school behaviour policy in line with the statutory guidance published in February 2018 (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children*

Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018).

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a CLA, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss.

Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of CLA and PLA. CLA and PLA with special educational needs should have exclusion as a behaviour management action as a last possible resort (*Regulation 4(1)(c) of the Equalities Act 2010 which means that a head teacher could only lawfully exclude a child for a reason relating to their disability, even a disability that results in the child having a tendency to physical abuse, if reasonable adjustments have been made*).

Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will make every effort to engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA and PLA.

Confidentiality

Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a “need to know basis”. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with nominated school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

Training

The Headteacher or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or when a new CLA or PLA is admitted to the school.