

New Perspectives School Children Looked After (CLA) Policy

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1. Statement of Intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Children Looked After (CLA) and previously Children Looked After (PCLA) are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation.

New Perspectives School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage students to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social, and emotional development.
- Ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for CLA and previously-CLA realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help students develop their cultural, moral, and social understanding.

2. Legal Framework

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

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2022) 'Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Definitions

"Children Looked After (CLA)" are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where 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 or respite care.

“Previously-CLA” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for CLA and previously-CLA.
- Reviewing the school’s policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child’s:
- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep CLA and previously-CLA safe.
- Ensuring CLA and previously-CLA have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of CLA in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
- The number of CLA and previously-CLA in the school
- An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other student groups
- The attendance of CLA and previously-CLA, compared to other student groups
- The level of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions, compared to other student groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA is a key priority.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA

The designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they understand the support available to CLA and previously-CLA.
- Promoting the educational achievement of CLA and previously-CLA at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations

- Ensuring CLA are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for CLA.
- Ensuring that CLA are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Working with the child's social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all CLA and previously-CLA.
- Maintaining up to date records of all CLA/PCLA who are on the school role
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated
 - Type of placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker if in residential care
 - Child Protection information where appropriate
 - Attendance figures
 - Behaviour including suspensions

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of CLA's respective social worker.
- 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.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of CLA and previously-CLA and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards CLA and previously-CLA.
- Promoting the self-esteem of CLA and previously-CLA.
- Being inclusive with all on-site and off-site activities.

The Virtual Head is responsible for:

The new responsibilities for VSHs were introduced in September 2021 – giving them a strategic leadership role to champion the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker. This means that they should be:

- Making visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities, including with children's social care, to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children.
- Promoting practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm.
- Levelling up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. This will include helping to ensure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover educationally from the impact of the pandemic.
- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's CLA, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support that is available to CLA and PCLA children.

- Working with the school to ensure all CLA in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for CLA.
- The strategic leadership of the cohort of children who have been assessed as being in need under Section 17 OF THE Children Act 1989 and currently have a social worker and those who have previously had a social worker (it covers all children who were assessed as needing a social worker at any time due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons, which includes all those subject to a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection Plan. This includes all children aged 0 – 18 in all educational settings.)

Ensuring that there are systems in place to:

- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the CLA who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the Head Teacher and Designated Teachers, careers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
- ensure that up-to-date and effective PEP's that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CLA.
- avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- ensure the educational achievement of CLA is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibility for promoting their welfare.
- report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of CLA through the authority's corporate parenting structures.
- Make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children.
- Promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in keeping children safe from harm.
- Level up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their full potential. This will include helping to make sure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover from the impact of Covid-19

4. PEP

All CLA must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

- The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a student to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher, and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- The PEP will address the student's full range of education and development needs, including:
 - Access to the appropriate provision
 - On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
 - Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
 - Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
 - School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
 - Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:

- Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
- Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training, and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
- Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interest

Working with agencies

- The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the CLA social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- The school will coordinate their review meetings.
- The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions, or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard CLA and previously-CLA.
- Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the agencies and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- The designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA will communicate with the agencies and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
- The designated teacher will communicate with the agencies and agree on how student premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- PP+ for previously-CLA will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school.
- The school will work with the agencies to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of CLA, or previously-CLA, and according to their needs.
- If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.
- The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the social worker and agencies regarding CLA who are absent without authorisation.
- The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CLA and previously-CLA.

5. Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of CLA and previously-CLA have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Options on accreditation
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting students to be aspirational for their future education, training, and employment, Safeguarding

All training will be provided so that staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep CLA and PCLA safe.

6. Student Mental Health

- CLA and previously-CLA are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CLA and previously-CLA, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- The school's mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of CLA and previously-CLA, and will always either be a member of, or supported by the senior leadership team or DSL

7. Suspensions and Exclusions

- Past experiences of CLA and previously-CLA will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.
- The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England' and as far as possible, avoid excluding any CLA.
- Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the Social Worker and agencies will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- Suspension or exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and Social Worker have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent suspension or exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the student's education in the event of suspension or permanent exclusion.

8. Students with SEND

- The class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents /carers when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- If appropriate, the social worker and agencies will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-CLA.

9. Information sharing and induction arrangements.

- Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CLA and previously-CLA are understood and met.
- On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure that the child is made to feel comfortable in the school.
- Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new PEP and ensure that communication systems are established early.
- In the first PEP meeting, the designated teacher will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips and other activities. At this meeting, any means of communication to aid the exchange and sharing of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed.

the arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on CLA and previously CLA and how data will remain secure.
- How students and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.

Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.

- How relevant information about individual students is passed between authorities, departments, and the school when students move.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.