

Learning for Ourselves, Respect, We Can



# CLA Policy for 'Children Looked After' and 'Previously Looked After Children'

Reviewer: Nicky Rix (Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC)

Date: March 2023

Reviewed by Curriculum Committee:

Ratified & Adopted by Full Governors:

Next update: March 2024

*RRS Article 9 You have the right to live with your parents unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you. Article 20 You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents. Article 21 You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care. Article 25 If you are in care or other situations away from home you have right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.*

## **WSSC Virtual School for Children Looked After**

### **The Lyndhurst Infant School policy for Education of Children Looked After**

Lyndhurst Infant School believes that as Corporate Parents/Carers/Guardians we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). This policy has been produced to take account of the West Sussex Virtual School and PEP Guidance, West Sussex Corporate Parent Board for CLA and National Government strategies for CLA and PLAC.

#### **Definitions**

In this policy, CLA refers to:

- Children who are in the care of a local authority
- Children who are being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions.

PLAC refers to those children who immediately after leaving care (as outlined above) became subject to:

- Adoption Order
- Child Arrangement Order
- Special Guardianship Order
- and have been declared as such to the school by parent/carers.

PLAC does not refer to:

- Children adopted from abroad
- Children under a CAO/SGO who have not previously been in the care of a local authority
- Children who have been in care and then placed back with parents.

#### **Aim**

To provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in and promotes the abilities and potential of all children.

To promote and secure educational progress and attainment of all care-experienced children. The virtual school tracks pupils' progress. The designated teacher and social workers are, therefore, an essential part of the team as we work together to achieve the best for our children and young people.

To bring the educational attainment of our CLA nearer to those of their peers and 'diminish the difference'.

To promote the educational achievement of PLAC.

Identifying our school's role as corporate parents/carers or guardians to promote and support the education of our CLA and PLAC. Asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

## **Responsibilities**

### **The School will:**

- Actively support, promote and celebrate the educational achievements of CLA and PLAC.
- Work in partnership with carers and agencies.
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance.
- Respect the confidentiality of CLA and PLAC and ensure that any information is shared on a need to know basis.
- Maintain records of all CLA.

These will include a record of the following:

- The name of the social worker, area office and contact details.
- Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
- Who holds Parental Responsibility, together with a note of any limitations on the ability or right to exercise this Parental Responsibility.
- Type of placement e.g. foster, respite, residential.
- Name of the contact person in Virtual School and contact details.
- Daily contact and telephone numbers where appropriate e.g. name of young person, name of parent, carer, key worker in children's home.
- Share Child safeguarding / disability information if appropriate.
- Baseline attainment information and all test results.
- Named persons who should receive copies of reports.
- The dates of PEP meetings held.

### **The Governing Body will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance;**

The governing body, head teacher and school leadership team will support the education of looked after and previously looked after children by ensuring that the Designated Teacher has:

- Appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others.
- Training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, including a good knowledge of SEN.
- Appropriate monitoring arrangements to ensure that the school/education setting is providing a stimulating and challenging learning environment.

They will also ensure that school policies consider the needs of looked after and previously looked after children. This consideration will include additional arrangements for looked after and previously looked after children when considering;

- Admission
- Attendance and Suspension
- Behaviour management
- Mental health needs
- Specific safeguarding challenges
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
  - Inclusion Policy
- Gifted and talented students
- Teaching and learning needs
- Educational visits and extended school activities.

The Governing body/trust board will hold the school to account on how it supports its looked after and previously looked after children, including;

- how the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is used
- level of progress.

### **The Designated Teacher will:**

The Designated Teacher (DT) will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance.

- The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a statutory document that is required for all looked-after-children and young people. It is a record (recorded on the epep-online) of the discussions and actions taken by professionals and corporate parents. PEP meetings must take place within 10 days of a child coming in to care.
- The DT is the central point of initial contact within the school. They will join up resources and support to minimise any disruption to a child's learning.
- The DT will work with Virtual School to promote the education of looked after and previously looked after children by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after and previously looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- They will take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. Our school will make sure that all staff:
  - Act as an advocate for the school's CLA and PLAC by having high expectations for their educational and personal achievement and positively promote their self-esteem, and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
  - Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (All staff have had attachment awareness and trauma training).
  - Understand how important it is to see children as individuals.
  - Appreciate the central importance of the looked after child's PEP and understand how it fits into the wider care planning for the child.
  - For previously looked after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a

contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

**The Designated Teacher will have a direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children. They will:**

- o Work directly with looked after and previously looked after children and their carer's, parents or guardians.
- o Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures.
  - o Ensure the pupil premium plus is used effectively within school to have the greatest positive impact on children's learning. This includes;
    - Ensuring parents and guardians of previously looked after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+
  - o Ensure looked after and previously looked after children are prioritised for support; listened to; encouraged to participate; and believe they can achieve through an ethos of aspiration.
- o Meet/make contact with the parent/foster carer and/or social worker, alongside the class teacher, to gather information on new CLA and PLAC entering the school.
- o Liaise with West Sussex Virtual School to ensure every CLA is receiving 25 hours of education per week, and to ensure additional support is available if required.
- o Ensure that should a CLA be identified as at risk of suspension, contact is made with the LA Inclusion Officer and the Head of the Virtual School.
- o The Designated Teacher will chair Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings to effectively plan to utilise school resources and ensure each child has access to the support they need to achieve.

These meetings will take place 3 times per academic year to review support and deploy effective resources.

- Documentation will be co-produced with family and social care and shared with appropriate professionals as part of the child's care plan.

- The DT will work closely with professional agencies including the foster carer; allocated social worker; Virtual School headteachers, advisors and ~~PEP Champions~~; learning and behaviour support (LBAT) agencies; EPS; SENDs, CAMHs, local police/youth offending

service; community nurses and any other professional agency involved in supporting the child and family.

- Hold a termly PEP (Personal Education Plan) meeting for each CLA in conjunction with the social worker, foster carer and parents (if appropriate). They will complete the 'School' sections ePEP to:
  - Attainment and Progress
  - Attendance
  - Child's voice
  - Parent/Carer views
  - SMART targets
  - Funding and impact of interventions (ring-fenced CLA PP+ funding).

This must be compatible with the child's Social Services Care Plan and form part of any other school plan. e.g. an EHCP, Pastoral Support Programme and Transition Plan, such as additional visits to next placement, exploring the child's feeling about the transition and transition meetings with the team around the child.

- To prepare for the PEP by meeting with the class teachers of CLA to discuss their development, attainment and progress in order to set effective targets for the child.
- Liaise with senior leaders responsible for intervention (e.g. Pupil Premium Lead/Committee, SENCO) to ensure that CLA and PLAC are receiving appropriate intervention, additional support and access to extra-curricular activities available to all students in the school.
- Ensure that CLA and PLAC are listened to and have access to support e.g. Feelings Group, Nurture group, Play Therapy etc., as appropriate to the needs of the child.
- Ensure that class teachers of CLA and PLAC are supported and kept informed of any issues relevant to their status.
- Teachers to adopt a therapeutic approach, following on from trauma training.
- Ensure that there is sensitivity to the background of CLA and PLAC in the teaching materials available, especially around work on families and family trees.
- Liaise with Social Services and contribute to the statutory CLA reviews in person or in report form – written or verbal - to promote the continuity and stability of their education.
- Refer any CLA attendance concerns to the PEI (Pupil Entitlement Investigation) Team, and supply attendance data as required.
- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is requested or sent to the new school.

- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies.
- Meet the Governor responsible for CLA each term for monitoring.
- Provide a full annual report to Governors (see 'Monitoring and Evaluation') and a termly update to the Governor responsible for CLA.
- Participate in appropriate training as provided by West Sussex Virtual School.

### **Transfer out of care**

- When children cease to be looked after the Designated Teacher will maintain links with Virtual Schools for the purposes of promoting the educational achievement of this group of previously looked after children to ensure continuity.
- The Designated Teacher will ensure that family members and carers are aware that they must pass on information about previous care status to any education settings. This information cannot be passed from school to school as it will be protected information under GDPR.

### **Voice of the child**

- We will listen to the voice of looked after and previously looked after children as a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs.

### **Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium**

Looked after children and children adopted from care, on a special guardianship or child arrangements order are eligible for PP+ funding. This is additional funding is provided to help improve the attainment of looked after and previously looked after children and close the attainment gap between this group and their peers.

The Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium + Lead will:

- Have high expectations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA, PLAC and ensure that PLAC are accessing appropriate interventions, alongside other PP children, with support from the Designated Teacher as required.
- Work alongside the Pupil Premium Committee to track the use of funding for CLA, PLAC, alongside other PP children. Please note that PLAC funding is not ring-fenced for the individual child.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher regarding interventions, progress and provision for CLA, PLAC.



- PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by looked after and previously looked after children
  - PP+ is allocated according to need rather than a personal budget.
- All pupil premium spending will take account of the specific needs of eligible pupils.
  - Our school will use pupil premium to address need in social, academic and mental health needs. This will be in agreement with the Virtual School (VSH) from the child's home authority.

Each term, the PP lead will carry out an analysis of data (both hard and soft) to identify attainment gaps and barriers to achievement. Research has shown that teacher expectation is a fundamental factor in pupil progress. A selection of strategies based on evidence of what is most likely to work in meeting that individual child's need will then be planned.

The PP lead will meet as regularly as fortnightly with the intervention teaching assistants to review individual PP/CLA/PLAC targets and ensure that expectations are high and progress is rapid.

### **Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND)**

- Looked after children and previously looked after children are significantly more likely to have SEN than their peers. Of those with SEN, a significant proportion will have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- The Designated Teacher will ensure that:
  - They work closely with the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable and follow the DfE Code of Practice  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)
  - Children's PEPs work in harmony with their EHC plan

### **Meeting Mental Health needs**

- Looked after children and previously looked after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers.
- The Designated Teacher has an important role in ensuring they and other school staff can identify signs of potential issues and understand where the school can draw on specialist services (Key members of staff have had mental health training). All staff have had trauma training.

- Our school will utilise the CAMHS education link to support understanding mental health needs for looked after and previously looked after children.
- This will enable us to improve a whole school understanding of attachment and trauma issues, and the impact on learning and behaviour for vulnerable children. Additionally, school to adopt a therapeutic approach to support the child's social, emotional and mental health.

## **Suspensions**

- The past experiences of looked after and previously looked after children can impact on their behaviour
- Where a looked after child is at risk of either fixed term or permanent suspension, the Designated Teacher will contact the relevant authority's Virtual School as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid suspension becoming necessary.
  - Designated to work with outside agencies to reduce the risk of suspension and complete a Pastoral Support Programme, if the child has a reduced timetable.

## **Monitoring and Evaluations**

The Designated Teacher will meet the Governor responsible for CLA each term to carry out monitoring. They will prepare a yearly report for Governors on the achievements and current status of the school's CLA and PLAC.

This will include:

- Workload issues arising as a result of the number of CLA and PLAC on roll in the school.
- Levels of progress and, where appropriate, national curriculum test results for CLA and PLAC in relation to all children.
- Interventions to raise achievement, such as study support, learning mentor support, home school contracts, ~~Pastoral Support~~ Therapeutic/Attachment Plans, counselling support e.g. Play therapy.
- Attendance figures and whether the pattern of attendance and suspensions for CLA and PLAC is different to that of all children.
- Whether CLA or PLAC have Special Educational Needs.
- At Risk of Suspension
- Changes in home placements.
- Any progress or planning issues arising from the PEPs.

- The impact of the school development plan or any other school policies on CLA or PLAC.

The Assessment Lead will monitor the progress and attainment of CLA and PLAC, alongside other 'groups' of children, as part of the data review cycle.

Class Teachers will monitor the progress and attainment of CLA and PLAC in their class, alongside other 'groups' of children.

The Governing body will monitor and evaluate the progress made by individuals and all the children using the same criteria used for other children in their peer group.

Lyndhurst Infant School have followed the Designated Teacher for Looked after and Previously Looked after Children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities.

DfE, February 2018.

## CLA

List of information about children looked after.

Updated: 21 December 2022

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683556/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)