



ST ALBANS GIRLS' SCHOOL

Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Policy

GB sub-committee: Personnel & Student Wellbeing Committee

Co-ordinator: Miss T Lambert

Last Reviewed: Autumn 2023

Next Review: Autumn 2024

Signed by:
Margaret Chapman
Head Teacher

Signed by:
Claire Barnard
Chair of Governors

1. RATIONALE

1.1

Background

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care and previously in care has been neglected. It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after children' (LAC) or children in care or 'children looked after' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year. This policy also covers children who have previously been 'in care', even if just for 1 day. It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives, or
- Even with parents – under supervision of Children's Services

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children's home, or
- In a residential school

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated

	<p>Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Governors (2009) and the Hertfordshire Policy Statement on Children Looked After and should be read in conjunction with it. All schools have been issued with a copy of each document and may also refer to the Virtual School page on the Hertfordshire GRID for Learning.</p> <p>It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.</p>
<p>2. AIMS</p>	
<p>2.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 Post CLA: Tess Lambert ● Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and Post CLA: Vicky Pearlman ● At St Albans Girls School, we will 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 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. 28 th 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. ● Our school community aims to champion the needs of CLA to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care. <p>Equality and Diversity Statement</p> <p>This policy is intended to be helpful for improvement in the education available 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 must be meeting their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010 and all protected characteristics therein.</p> <p>An inclusive learning environment in which everybody is respected is conducive to a happy and healthy learning environment.</p> <p>The Virtual School Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Toolkit training will support a greater understanding of diversity and equality and is relevant to many children.</p> <p>We have delivered the Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Toolkit training to all school staff and will develop a school response based on the principles within the toolkit. We have also prepared an action plan to ensure that the whole school takes a holistic approach to well-being.</p> <p>This will help to create an ethos where all of those working within the school feel confident in reporting and evidencing issues relating to equality and diversity. Promoting</p>

	<p>an inclusive environment is key to the well-being of all pupils as is a commitment to deepening pupils' understanding of "democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance" (Ofsted 2019).</p> <p>Our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to provide a safe and secure environment where education is always central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of CLA and Post CLA ● to narrow the gap between the attainment of CLA and PLA and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress ● that they benefit from school-based interventions, including 'Making Good Progress 121 Tuition', 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 ● for 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). ● for all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with one key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school that school systems facilitate discrete support, as appropriate 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 ● Our Behaviour Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour, but we understand that not all behaviour is a matter of choice. We will not enforce sanctions that shame and ostracise children looked after from their peers, school, community or family. In this school we seek to create an inclusive and positive school ethos for every pupil CLA and PLA and their families will 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)
<p>3. PROCEDURES</p>	
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Personal Education Plans (ePEP) and Progress Report for Governors (CLASEF):</p> <p>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. In any one school year there will be at least 3 PEP meetings for each CLA. The school will complete both sections of the Progress Report for Governors to share our plan for improvement and development in school for disadvantaged children and also 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 as the annual report.</p>

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 and have at least 2 days per year training to remain fully informed. They will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and PLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receive appropriate training.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is Tess Lambert, she is a qualified teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, 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+ 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, including attachment theory and trauma-informed practice
- delivering the Virtual School training: 'An introduction to Attachment Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' to the whole school
- providing and attending training and offering advice to the whole school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive, relationship-based 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) of 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 this 'school policy' for CLA
- attending relevant training, including the Virtual School toolkit training on 'Attachment Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' (to be found on the Virtual School website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool)
- 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

will contact the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention, as outlined in our attendance policy.

Admissions/ Transitions:

School procedures to support CLA during admission and transition include:

- prioritising CLA and PLA at the point of admission
- the 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 will work creatively 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 oversight (in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the targets set as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, ePEP and Progress Report for Governors.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities:

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA who have special educational needs & disabilities by:

- having high expectation of progress each academic year (in line with the expectation set out in the ePEP and Progress Report for Governors)
- 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 SEND 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 SEND Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight with the school SENCO the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained.

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) 2022, if there are any safeguarding concerns.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

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 student
- 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

Suspension/ Permanent Exclusion:

- We have reviewed the school Behaviour policy (Autumn 2023) 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 suspending/ 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 suspension/ exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School.
- If there is no option other than suspension/ exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion.
- The school will use a variety of alternative therapeutic interventions to avoid suspending/excluding a child looked after or previously looked after. For example, mentoring, restorative practice, internal consequences.
- School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of suspension/ exclusion of CLA and PLA. CLA and PLA with special educational needs should have suspension/ 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 suspend/ 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 develop positive professional relationships 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.

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After

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4. MONITORING

4.1 Each student in care will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan

	<p>(ePEP) that is developed jointly by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher. This will identify specific areas of focus and include targets and associated action to improve the student performance or educational achievement. Areas for consideration will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achievement Record (academic or otherwise) ● Development needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences) ● Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations) ● Educational Data so that progress may be easily tracked between Key Stages ● Extended learning opportunities ● Involvement in Out of School Hours Activities ● Special needs (if any) ● Attendance ● Behaviour
4.2	<p>The ePEP will be updated and reviewed at least annually or at the point of any major change and contribute to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Designated Teacher is accountable for the implementation and review of the educational action to meet the targets within the Plan.</p>
4.3	<p>The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of all children looked after against the key indicators outlined above. For more information please go to: www.thegrid.org.uk/virtualschool</p>