



# **Children Looked after Policy**

**Date Published: January 2023**

**Review Date: November 2023**



# **Policy for the education of Child Looked After (CLA) and previously CLA**

## **Policy Implementation**

The Designated Person for CLA has the responsibility for the day-to-day welfare and achievements of the students at the Academy. They also have a strategic role for overseeing all CLA in the Academy and work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure the safeguarding of these individuals.

This guidance describes our approach to meeting the requirements set out in

- The Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Duty on Local Authorities to promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children)
- Promoting the education of CLA and previously CLA (Feb 2018)
- Care Matters, Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 "A First-Class Education")
- The Children and Young person's Act 2008 (Duty on Schools to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care) Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (CLA)

In line with our ethos and principles, our guidance aims to identify specific roles and responsibilities within school to promote the learning, progress and well-being of CLA The Academy recognises that the provisions outlined in this guidance must be in place regardless of whether there are any CLA currently on the school roll.

## **Key Contacts:**

**Designated Lead:** Mrs Paula Smith Assistant Principal

**Governor Responsible:** Reverend Chris Youngman

## **Aims and Objectives:**

The Academy commitment to enhanced support

The Academy recognises that it is the corporate parent (any and all adults working for the Council or a school) that has responsibility and accountability for the well-being and future prospects of children in their care. A good corporate parent is expected to offer everything that a good parent would.

We recognise that entering care represents a significant change in a child's life. At this stage the State takes on an immense responsibility for these children by agreeing to undertake the parental role on a day to day basis. That means that all those working for the State at a local

level in this school should demand no less for each child in care than they would for their own children.

- The Academy will ensure that high quality learning opportunities for an education are provided for all our students
- We will ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all.
- We recognise that CLA can be especially vulnerable and are sometimes 'at risk' of failure in the learning context

**The role of the designated teacher for looked-after children** - The designated teacher should:

- Be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the fullest in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning
- Have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's role. This involves working with the Virtual Schools to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the learning is personalised and emotional, academic and personal needs are prioritised
- Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians and social workers to: promote good home school links; support progress; ensure that they understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home; help to understand how the school teaches literacy and numeracy; and encourage high aspirations, working with the child to plan for the future
- Should discuss with the social worker how the school should engage with birth parents and ensure that school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's personal education plan (PEP) within the school and liaise with outside agencies
- Work with the designated safeguarding leads to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and effectively responded to
- Have ultimate responsibility for leading the process of target setting for individual looked-after children in school and rigorously tracking their attainment progress. Provide an annual report on looked-after children to the LGB. This will be sensitively written so as not to identify a looked-after child and must include information on attainment, progress, attendance, exclusions, impact of pupil premium plus and admissions
- The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked-after and previously looked-after

children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils

**This means making sure that all staff:**

- Have strong awareness, training and skills around the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and how to support them
- Have high expectations and set targets to accelerate educational progress
- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children might find it difficult to build relationships of trust because of their experience and how this might affect a child's behaviour

- Understand how important it is to see CLA and previously CLA as individuals rather than as a homogenous group, not publically treat them differently from their peers and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status
- Appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly the child's own understanding that they are being supported
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of the social workers, Virtual School and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and 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 and guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school

In addition to this, the designated teacher should contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:

- They do not unintentionally put looked-after or previously looked-after children at a disadvantage
- Transitions to the next phase of education are supported, with thought given to the future, careers advice and guidance about further education, training and employment (where appropriate)
- There are no barriers to looked-after children and previously looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers its pupils
- There is a culture of high expectations and aspirations
- The young person is able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets
- They are also able to talk about any difficult issues with a sympathetic and empathetic adult, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- Looked-after and previously looked-after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that they have access to academic focused study support
- They are encouraging carers to understand the importance of supporting learning at home

Statutory guidance contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

## **Admissions**

- The Academy Council supports the Local Authority's approach to admissions giving CLA

the highest priority for admission to the identified school

- The Academy will ensure that CLA are named a first priority within our written admissions criteria
- Sometimes care placement changes lead to CLA entering school mid-term or mid-year if this is thought to be in the best interests of the child. This Academy will ensure that in these circumstances CLA will be admitted to the school in a timely manner, even if this would mean that this would increase class sizes above the recommended maximum. As necessary, we will give a positive welcome, plan entry, offer additional support and pre-entry visits as required to help students settle into school.

### **Pupil Premium Funding**

- Pupil Premium funding will be used appropriately to provide additional identified support and intervention, taking into account the specific needs of pupils
- The designated teacher will work with the social worker, carer and young person to identify support which will help the young person to achieve their potential
- All funding for looked-after children will be monitored and agreed by the virtual school and will be discussed, reviewed and agreed at the young person's PEP meeting

### **Inclusion and Allocation of Resources**

- Our guidance recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based, and stimulating curriculum and learning programme
- For CLA there can often be a need to develop learning opportunities emphasising personalised planning and planned inclusive approaches
- The Academy makes all appropriate learning provision for CLA. Resources are allocated to support CLA in line with this guidance and with our wider school teaching and learning policies and good practice
- The Academy will ensure that a Home to School agreement is signed by the primary carer and a copy is sent to the CLA's social worker
- Additional funding allocated to CLA students must be ring fenced to meet their needs. An account for the spending of these funds must be kept and made available upon request
- We aim to ensure that CLA student needs are met with additionality via Pupil Premium

### **Monitoring the Progress of Children Looked After**

- Progress for CLA is monitored and supported and is guided by Academy policies for teaching and learning.
- We will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of CLA at regular intervals. This will be formally reported to the Virtual School
- We will ensure that the Academy makes an assessment of the student's needs and attainment on entry, to ensure continuity of learning
- We recognise the importance of Electronic Personal Education Plans (EPEPs) and understand that they are statutory school documents

- The EPEP is key to the planning and monitoring of education for a CLA
- The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After will ensure there is an EPEP in place for all CLA in the Academy
- The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After will ensure an EPEP takes place within 20 days of a CLA joining the school or becoming Looked After

### **Attendance and Exclusion**

- The Academy recognises that nationally CLA are statistically much more likely to have a poor attendance record and are up to 5 times more likely to be excluded than their non-looked after peers
- The Academy will take specific steps to monitor the attendance of CLA and will notify all appropriate partners at an early stage if there is an indication that problems with attendance might occur
- The Academy will take all reasonable steps to ensure that exclusion is rarely used for CLA and then is always only as a last resort, after all other avenues have been explored
- The Academy will make arrangements for first day provision for any excluded CLA as it would for any pupil after day 6 of exclusion
- The Academy will ensure that should a CLA be identified as at risk of exclusion, then contact is made with the LA Inclusion Officer and the named contact within the Virtual School immediately, to enable early intervention / preventative strategies to be instigated
- In adverse circumstances, such as COVID lockdown, CLA will be encouraged to attend school, and will have regular safeguarding checks if working from home

### **Record Keeping and Information Sharing**

- The Designated Teacher for CLA will co-ordinate record keeping for all CLA in school
- Records will include individual learning plans, up to date progress and attainment records, EPEP planning records and personalised information relating to care context as appropriate. These records will be maintained in a single place, having regard to the statutory nature of some of these documents and the confidential information that they contain
- CLA status is appropriately 'flagged' in school management information systems, ensuring information and planning records are readily available as required. This will include on MyConcern
- The Academy will ensure there is ready access to information and up to date contact details for carers, parents (where appropriate), social worker and the named contact in the Virtual School
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving school promptly if there is a transfer to another school
- Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of the Academy staff team. We are guided by best practice and on the 'need to know'. Wherever possible students' wishes are taken into account in sharing information within the staff team
- The Designated Teacher for CLA will attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to the statutory CLA review process

### **Appointments of Staff**

- The Academy recognises that there is a statutory requirement to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After
- All staff have a responsibility for the educational achievement and well-being of CLA as a corporate parent. The work of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is to lead in this area, but they do not hold sole responsibility

This policy was been approved by the board on: January 2023

Signature of LGB chair:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'T. Foster', with a long, sweeping underline.

Name of chair of the Board: Tim Foster

Date for renewal: November 2023