



**CLA Policy**

**2023-24**

## Background

Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEND). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEND, needs careful assessment and planning. Excellent practice in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children already exists in many schools. The designated teacher role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice becomes universal.

Attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non-looked-after children.

The support that schools and designated teachers give to children who are looked-after and previously looked-after should not be seen in isolation. All looked-after and previously looked-after children will have a wide range of support mechanisms that will assist in promoting their educational achievement. The child's foster carer (or residential care worker), social worker or, for previously looked-after children, parents or guardian, will have day-to-day responsibilities for the child - and different agreements will be in place regarding Parental Responsibility. Within the local authority, the Virtual School Headteacher will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the school. In Tameside, Amanda Aylward is the Virtual School Head.

### Policy Objective:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children on the roll of the school. At Denton Community College we will create an environment where children looked after (CLA) and children previously looked after (Previously CLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the DfE Guidance Document for Designated Teachers ([2018](#)) and Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children ([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 aim to champion the needs of CLA to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care.

**Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children:** Mrs Graham. The role is under review and will be re allocated following the SEN Review (20.06.2023)

**Designated Governor for Equality:** Mrs Hornby

### Our Aims for CLA and Previously CLA:

- 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 Previously CLA
- to maximise the attainment of CLA and Previously CLA students
- to ensure that they benefit from school-based interventions and to use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding to ensure effective impact
- for all CLA to have a minimum of three Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning to ensure accelerated and rapid progress
- 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
- CLA and their foster 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

## **Educational Planning for Children Looked After**

### **Personal Education Plans (PEP)**

The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting – these will be reviewed termly, within the statutory framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals. If needs arise additional PEP meetings will be held. The school will use the PEP documents from different local authorities, including electronic PEPs where required. The school will monitor the efficient and effective spend of the PP+ funding and inform the school Governing Body.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The **Headteacher** and **Governing Body** are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CLA and Previously CLA. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children 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 Previously CLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receives appropriate training.

**The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children** will promote improved educational life chances by:

- ensuring that the CLA or Previously CLA have access to quality first teaching
- tracking the progress of CLA and Previously CLA
- ensuring that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies, including the PEP and CLA review meetings
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA, including attachment
- 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 Previously CLA
- ensuring that the voice of the child is central to decision making for each CLA, including the termly PEP meetings
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of CLA and Previously CLA, school resource needs 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
- ensuring that CLA and Previously CLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- ensuring that carers and care staff are engaged with the targets outlined in the PEP
- managing the work of the CLA support staff in school
- developing a new model of support for Previously CLA, in line with best practice

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

- reading the school policy for CLA and Previously 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 inclusive 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 Previously CLA 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 an early intervention, as outlined in the

attendance policy.

### **Admissions/ Transitions:**

School procedures to support CLA during admission and transition include:

- prioritising CLA and Previously CLA 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 Previously CLA at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

### **Special Educational Needs:**

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

- adhering to graduated approach as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice
- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year
- ensuring that all plans are clear and communicated: appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring coordination of support: the Designated Teacher and SENDCO monitor delivery of interventions and review outcomes with teachers ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- where an EHCP is in place, PEPs and EHCP should be aligned to avoid duplication

**Safeguarding:** School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CLA and Previously CLA by: familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy; 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' (updated annually) and reporting any concerns promptly and in person. Staff can find key information on the staff VLE safeguarding site.

### **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 reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall PEP for the student and planned with the Virtual School
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the CLA or Previously CLA
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that PEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

### **Exclusion:**

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 Previously CLA. The Virtual School will be informed of exclusions and will work with the school on reducing the recurrence of the issues. (Ref: DfE Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England: Statutory Guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion. September 2017).

### **Identification of Previously CLA**

Previously looked-after pupils are children who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because

they are the subject of:

- an adoption
- a special guardianship order
- a child arrangements order
- adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

School must satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support by asking the child's parents for evidence of their previously looked-after status. For children adopted outside England and Wales, the child must have been looked after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, designated teachers will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, we will discuss eligibility with the Virtual School Head.

### **Multi-Agency Working:**

School staff will engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This should include: Virtual Schools, Social Care, health, carers. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA and Previously CLA.

### **Tameside Virtual School**

Virtual School Headteacher: Rachel Weedon

<https://www.tameside.gov.uk/tamesidevirtualschool>

### **Linked policies**

Safeguarding and child protection

Equality statement and objectives

SEND policy