



St Nicholas Catholic High School

Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

To be read in conjunction with

**Catholic Ethos Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Behavioural Policy
Anti-bullying Policy
SEN Policy
Attendance Policy
Admissions Policy**

DFE: Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs: statutory guidance for local authorities (January 2013)

DFE: Mental health and behaviour in schools: Departmental advice for school staff (November 2018)

DFE: Promoting the education of Looked-after Children and previously looked-after children (February 2018)

DFE: The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (February 2018)

DFE: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

Version Control

Current version	Previous version	Summary of changes made
March 2020	Feb 2019	'CLA' changed to 'Children in Care'
March 2020	Feb 2019	'Looked After students' to 'CLA'
March 2020	Feb 2019	'where to go to report to' changed to 'whom to report to'
March 2020	Feb 2019	'Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection' changed to Designated Safeguarding Lead
March 2020	Feb 2019	'including how Pupil Premium Plus is used' removed
March 2020	Feb 2019	DFE: Mental health and behaviour in schools: Departmental advice for school staff (March 2016) updated to November 2018
March 2020	Feb 2019	Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) updated to 2020

Policy Impact Statement	
Policy:	
This Policy has been implemented:	
Fully	✓
Partially	
Occasionally	
Not at all (give reasons why)	
What revisions need to be made:	
To the Policy?	See Version Control Above
To its implementation?	

Aims of the Policy

To support our Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) in a safe and secure environment and give them access to every opportunity to continually achieve and enjoy their learning.

To recognise and support the specific challenges faced by CLA and PLAC, while continuing to foster a culture of high expectations of learning, behaviour and progress. St Nicholas Catholic High School recognises that equality of opportunity does not mean equal provision for all, but indeed that some children, such as CLA and PLAC, need additional support in order to be given equal chance of excelling at St Nicholas Catholic High School.

Definition

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after if s/he is in the care of or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by a local authority. The term 'CLA' (CLA) refers to:

- (i) Children accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- (ii) Children subject to a care order (section 31.1) or interim care order (section 38)
- (iii) Children who are subject to emergency orders for the protection of the child (section 44)

The term 'Previously Looked After' refers to:

- (i) Children who after being in care (as defined above) became subject to an adoption order, child arrangement order or special guardianship order

BACKGROUND

We recognise that many CLA and PLAC have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. 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 any fragmented educational experience needs careful assessment and planning.

We understand that all CLA and PLAC will have suffered significant loss and trauma and may have experienced abuse and/or neglect. This is likely to have considerable impact on their ability to access the curriculum. CLA and PLAC are prioritised at St Nicholas Catholic High School for additional support to manage their learning and behaviour, where needed.

We also recognise that whilst in care, some events can retrigger traumatic experiences (eg a court hearing, contact with family or friends, or an aspect of the curriculum that cannot be anticipated). This can affect behaviour and may affect progress, even for students who had previously been settled and 'on track'. Staff working with the child will need to use additional strategies, specific to that child's needs.

Roles and Responsibilities of staff for CLA

- Ensure any student in care is sensitively supported and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievements of CLA.
- Respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of Personal Education Plans and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- Attend CLA Reviews as a professional with direct understanding of the child/young person's educational needs, where appropriate, and as indicated by the Designated Teacher.
- Be aware of challenging behaviours that can result from trauma. Adapt behaviour management strategies in response to any challenging behaviour resulting from re-triggering of trauma and seek advice from the Designated Teacher, as needed.
- Provide a supportive climate in school, enabling children in care to achieve stability.
- As a corporate parent, make additional efforts to communicate to CLA your belief in their ability to achieve.
- Set PEP Targets as requested

The role of the Designated Teacher (DT) for CLA

- To promote a culture in which CLA believe they can succeed, and aspire to further training, education and higher education, and/or employment.
- To maintain an up-to-date register of CLA and inform colleagues on a need to know basis. Sensitivity and confidentiality are critical.
- To attend relevant training so that they are aware of statutory responsibilities and procedures for CLA.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implications for the school in respect of CLA.
- To understand the impact of trauma, loss and separation and how this can affect behaviour, including how attachment styles can affect their learning.
- To co-ordinate/deliver training to staff, (teaching and non-teaching), and governors so they are aware of the complex issues and educational disadvantage affecting many CLA and young people.
- To understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome any disadvantages, and the need to promote the involvement of CLA in, for example: school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils.
- Report to the Governing Body annually on the performance of the CLA (see section *Responsibilities of the School Governing Body*).

- To ensure all teachers know when there is a Child Looked After in their class, and what that child's specific needs are. This does not mean that all staff are informed about the child's Looked After status, or that they are given all details.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social care colleagues and other Children's Services professionals who support the child.
- To be the first point of contact for other professionals working with CLA, and ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies. To ensure in conjunction with the social worker, that all relevant education and care information is available at the point of admission into the school so that appropriate placement can occur. Where a child leaves the school, to pass the child's records to the social worker if possible, so as to avoid admission delays with the new school. Where difficulties arise in obtaining information from a previous school, the DT will contact Children's Social Care and relevant Local Authority help to obtain this information.
- To monitor the educational progress of all CLA in order to inform the school's development plan. To ensure that all CLA have targets which although realistic are also challenging. The targets should reflect the high expectations we hold about CLA.
- Ensure the child, carer(s), social worker and other relevant parties receive early notification of school-based meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication, both written and verbal, remains regular and positive.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, repeated or sustained absence, internal truancy or risk of exclusion.
- To identify with teachers the student's strengths and gaps in learning, and any barriers to learning. This should form the basis of the PEP, or the refinement of it.
- To ensure the young person has an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP). If not, then to arrange the meeting in partnership with the child's social worker. The DT will ensure that the school has updated information on the child's attainment, progress and educational needs, regardless of whether a PEP meeting has been arranged.
- To ensure that the actions identified in the plan are implemented and reviewed at least twice a year, but preferably termly.
- To facilitate the completion of the student section of the PEP.
- Ensure that someone is available to attend CLA Reviews on each child/young person and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- To supervise admission of new CLA and ensure appropriate induction and transition support into school.
- It is important that each Child Looked After starts school with the correct uniform and a school planner where appropriate. Most CLA do not want to be identified as different, and staff will respect and support this.
- To consider, wherever possible:
 - that the child starts school on the same day that other students are admitted; that they have a 'buddy' allocated from the first day; that they know whom to report to in the event of any difficulties that may arise.
- Ensure that each student in care has an identified member of staff they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes. Members of staff who take on this role may themselves need some emotional support at times, by an appropriate member of staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that students may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensure that CLA play a full and active part in the life of the school and have access to extended school provision where required.
- Ensure that if/when the child transfers to another school, all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school with minimal delay.

- If a Child Looked After on roll moves educational setting, the DT will advise the social worker about the likely impact of a move on the child's education and what should be done to minimise this.
- To liaise with the appropriate LA team member for the monitoring of the CLA in the school.
- To contact/liaise with the LA and Virtual Head if a Child Looked After in the school needs extra support
- If a Child Looked After transfers out of care, their educational needs are unlikely to have changed. The Designated Teacher will liaise with/hand-over monitoring and support to other staff members, in order to ensure that the child's needs continue to be met
- Will ensure that all staff are fully aware and up to date with information about their roles and responsibilities regarding CLA as outlined in appendix 3
- Ensure CPD or briefings to keep staff, including new staff, fully informed about CLA

The role of the Headteacher

- Will ensure that the DT carries out their role to the highest possible standard.
- Will ensure that all staff, led by the DT, fulfil their roles and responsibilities so that CLA at St Nicholas Catholic High School become the best they possibly can be

The role of The Governing Body

- Will ensure that there is a qualified and experienced teacher named as the Designated Teacher (DT) for CLA, and that s/he is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities.
- Ensure that the DT has access to appropriate training and has sufficient time to carry out duties and to receive support.
- Support the Headteacher, DT and other members of staff in ensuring the needs of CLA are met, and have a named governor for CLA.
- Receive as a minimum an annual report from the DT
- Hold the school to account on how it supports CLA and PLAC and their level of progress

CLA Placed by other Authorities

- CLA placed in care placements outside their originating authority, and especially those who are a long way from home, are especially vulnerable. It is the responsibility of the originating authority to ensure that the identified educational needs of any child placed in another authority area will be effectively met in the proposed placement before it is agreed.
- School and the social worker should ensure that the Personal Education Plan is completed within 20 school days of the young person starting school, and that this is completed with the child and their carer. Where additional support is identified by the school, record this on the Personal Education Plan.
- However, where there are delays, school will endeavour to gain information from the previous school. Good practice would be to assess educational needs promptly and to plan for additional support where needed. This can occur before a PEP meeting and in readiness for the PEP.

DESIGNATED TEACHER ANNUAL REPORT TO GOVERNORS (APPENDIX 1)

- Governors must receive as a minimum an annual report from the DT. The report should typically include:
 - The number of CLA in the school (both CWAC and from other Local Authorities).
 - A clear overview of the educational needs and levels of progress of CLA in the school
 - Attendance and fixed term exclusion compared to the whole school population
 - Any SEND needs
 - Destinations of CLA who leave the school
 - Ensure that school policies and procedures give CLA equal access and/or positively discriminate CLA by prioritising their needs e.g.
 - Transition support
 - Public examinations
 - Additional support
 - Curriculum planning
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Work experience and career guidance
- How the teaching and learning needs of CLA are reflected in school development plans.
- Whether the school is making full use of all available resources, in order to maximise opportunity for CLA to achieve the best levels of progress
- Enable the Governing body to make overall judgments about the DT role in the context of wider school planning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOOKED AFTER CHILD (APPENDIX 2)

Confidentiality

- The Designated Teacher will decide, in conjunction with relevant local authority staff, their approach to sharing sensitive information about an individual child. This is not just about keeping records but also about a child's identity in school. Many CLA are reluctant for information to be known, as they may feel stigmatised or different because they do not live with their families. For other children there will be official requirements that their status is not identified. All staff must be sensitive to the degree of information disclosure needed, according to the case and situation. All effort is taken to fully include the Child Looked After in the school and local community, and steps are taken to avoid stigmatising. For example, the DT will address any parental or community concerns with individuals, on an 'as and when basis'. Teaching staff will address any issues or prejudice amongst students through the curriculum, preferably when the Child Looked After is not present).
- The DT will decide, with local authority staff, the extent to which information will be shared, and with which staff, including Teaching Assistants, on a case by case basis. It may not be necessary to share details of the child's traumatic past, where an understanding can be reached about the child's current needs and strategies to support these. Some cases may require selected staff to understand how specific previous experiences are impacting on current behaviour.
- Where information is shared by selected staff, the young person is made aware of this, although how this is shared with them will depend on their age and understanding. (The explanation should emphasise that the school, social worker and carers are working together to promote the young person's education). For a

child who is newly looked after, it is likely to be important to establish his/her view of their changed circumstances, and to monitor how this impacts on their behaviour, attendance and performance.

- CLA may need adult support to prepare for when they are asked about home by other students or staff. We aim to plan for this by discussing this with the child, on their entry to the school. (Or before, where possible, eg at a transition planning meeting). This may also need to be considered when their care status changes, as needed.

Arriving at School

- Some CLA may have long journeys to school, particularly if they live long distances from the school, as a result of changes in care placement. It is important that consideration is given to how late arrivals are managed and recorded, given that this may be out of the child/young person's control. Staff should be sensitive to how they address this.

Attendance

- It is vital that CLA have good attendance, as a means to improve their educational outcomes. School closely monitors the attendance of all CLA on roll.
- Where attendance of a Looked After Child is a cause for concern:
 - The form tutor will raise with the Year Leader and key worker any concerns with attendance.
 - Typically the Year Leader will problem-solve barriers to attendance with the carer and student in a face to face meeting at the earliest opportunity.
 - If concerns continue, these will be raised with the Education Welfare Service and a multi-agency approach to improving attendance and engagement in learning will be planned and recorded as part of the PEP.
 - Holistic needs and barriers to learning should be addressed by identified professionals within a specified time frame on a case by case basis.
 - All CLA will be placed on the first day ring back system with the school attendance officer to ensure that any absence is queried before 10am.
 - Attendance and academic data will be shared with Welfare Call and the Local Authorities as and when requested

Learning Mentors

- School will consider allocating a learning mentor to CLA, to act as a regular point of contact through the duration of the child's time at school.
- School will be mindful that all CLA may need mentoring, and this should not exclude CLA who are high achievers.
- Mentor support may be needed to provide emotional support and guidance at times of pressure and stress, where language ability and emotional development enable this to occur.
- Evidence from other schools and LAs indicates very positive outcomes, including increased attainment when barriers to learning are addressed.

- Many CLA value the time spent with their mentors and the opportunity to share issues concerning their education.
- There may be no other adult that CLA are able to have this detailed discussion with on a regular basis.
- Learning Mentors will be invited to PEPs and reviews to share the young person's wishes and feelings.

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