



Children Looked After (CLA) Policy

Last reviewed and approved: Autumn 2023

Next review date: Autumn 2024

Appendices:

1: Bucks CC Guidance links

Modifications 2023:

Changes to reflect updated guidance 2023

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1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for **Children Looked After (CLA)** and Post **Children Looked After (Post-CLA)**.

The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of CLA and Post CLA, and supports other staff members to do this too.

Children, staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for **Children Looked After (CLA)** and **Post Children Looked After (Post-CLA)**

([statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and Post looked-after children](#))

It also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008.

3. Definitions

Children Looked After are registered pupils that are:

In the care of a local authority, or

Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

Post Children Looked After are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:

- o A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
- o A special guardianship order
- o An adoption order

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a CLA's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential. The PEP is updated termly and shared with all professionals involved in the welfare and support of the CLA, a meeting is held to discuss the PEP and other provision in place to meet the CLA's needs.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's CLA, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of CLA and Post CLA.

4. Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is Mrs L. Sim

You can contact Mrs Sim by emailing the school office on office@bedgroveinfant.co.uk or telephone in complete confidentiality 01296 481353

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of CLA and Post CLA at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

5. Role of the designated teacher

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving CLA and Post CLA
- Promote the educational achievement of every CLA and Post CLA on roll by working with Virtual School Heads (VSH) and promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how CLA and Post CLA learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of CLA and Post CLA
- Promote a culture in which CLA and Post CLA are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with CLA and Post CLA. Work directly with CLA and Post CLA and their carers and parents to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of CLA PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding CLA and Post CLA are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve carers and parents of CLA and Post CLA in decisions affecting their child's education

5.2 Supporting Children Looked After

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure CLA's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs
- Monitor and track how CLA's attainment progresses under their PEPs, alongside the Social Worker and Virtual School
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils
- Ensure that a CLA's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered, alongside the Social Worker and Virtual School
- Ensure that PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced

- Ensure that the updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- Ensure they transfer a CLA's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

5.3 Supporting both Children Looked After and Post Children Looked After

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of CLA and Post CLA are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher for CLA and Post CLA offers opportunities to meet parents, guardians or carers every term to discuss the progress of their child and how funding is being used effectively
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for CLA can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of Post CLA about pupil premium funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support Post CLA
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of CLA and Post CLA in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and pastoral needs
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of CLA and Post CLA and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to CLA, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a CLA may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in CLA and Post CLA, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in CLA and Post CLA and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for CLA, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of CLA and Post CLA

5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of CLA and Post CLA
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of Post CLA and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for children looked after, such as; finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans, ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when CLA are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action, talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and

what the local authority should do to minimise disruption, making sure that, if a child looked after moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process, and seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual CLA and Post CLA, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians

- Make sure that for each CLA; there is an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer or parent and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress, school policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents, teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips
- Where a CLA is at risk of suspension; contact the VSH 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, and, working with the VSH and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour

The Role of the Governor for Children Looked After

The name of the Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After is Sue Quirk.

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis

- The number of Children Looked After in the school
- Standards achieved
- Attendance
- Incidence of fixed term or permanent suspensions.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Children Looked After have equal and sometimes priority access to:

- Admissions
- Additional educational support
- Extracurricular activities and after school clubs, where appropriate

6. Monitoring arrangements

Mrs. L. Sim, Deputy Headteacher and designated teacher for CLA, will review this policy annually. At every review, the full governing board will approve it.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures, available on our school website:

Child Protection

SEN

Supporting pupils with medical needs

Children who cannot attend school due to Health Needs

Behaviour

Suspensions (within Behaviour Policy-following BCC guidance)

It is noted that the guidance to schools on suspensions (updated 2022) draws particular attention to CLA as a group especially at risk of suspension. Every practicable means will be used to maintain the child in school and we will seek LA and other professional advice as soon as possible in order to avoid suspending the pupil. The child's social worker would also be involved at the earliest opportunity. In any case, where a CLA was suspended anyone who is **legally defined** as the parent will have the right to make representations and to appeal.

Appendix 1:

Bucks CC Guidance for Children Looked After

Guidance from the Virtual School:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/schools/the-virtual-school/advice-for-carers-and-educational-settings/>

Guidance from Bucks CC:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/care-for-children-and-families/looked-after-children/looked-after-children/>

Suspensions guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspension>