



# Education of Children Looked-After and Children Previously Looked-After Policy

Responsible Staff	ACO (Deputy Headteacher)
Governors Committee Responsible	Full Governing Body
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## Designated Teacher Policy

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### **1.Statement of Intent**

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (CPLA) are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Exhall Grange Specialist School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for CLA and CPLA realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.
- Appoint a suitable member of staff as the Designated Teacher for CLA and CPLA children
- The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of CLA and CPLA, and supports other staff members to do this too
- 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.Legal Framework**

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Children Previously Looked-After. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities

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

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### **3. Definitions**

**Children Looked After (CLA)** 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

**Children Previously Looked After (CPLA)** 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:

- A Child Arrangements Order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
- A Special Guardianship Order
- An Adoption Order

They appear to the governing board to have:

- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

**Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is a statutory requirement for children and young people in care, ensuring their educational progress is tracked and supported. It's a key part of their care plan, detailing what needs to happen for them to reach their full potential. The PEP should be an evolving record, reflecting the child's needs, aspirations, and how these can be met within their schooling.

**Electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP)** is the virtual school platform for tracking attainment, monitoring attendance and overseeing the allocation of Pupil Premium, using ePEP smart targets.

**Virtual School Head (VSH)** is a statutory role in local authorities in England, tasked with promoting the educational outcomes of children looked after by the local authority. VSHs are responsible for managing pupil premium funding, allocating it effectively to schools and alternative provision settings, and ensuring that looked-after children benefit from high-quality education. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children

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### **4.Roles and Responsibilities**

Exhall Grange Specialist School recognises the need to champion performance for CLA and CPLA and is committed to improving outcomes for them.

Those with responsibilities include:

#### **4.1 The Governing Board**

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there is a named Designated Governor for CLA and CPLA
- Ensuring that there is a named Designated Teacher for CLA and CPLA.
- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for CLA and CPLA
- Being aware of whether the school has CLA and CPLA and how many (no names).
- Ensuring all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA and CPLA
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Holding the school to account, through the Designated Teacher, on how it supports its CLA and CPLA (including how the Pupil Premium Plus is used) and their level of progress.
- Ensuring the Designated Teacher for CLA and CPLA has received the appropriate training. The Designated Teacher and staff with delegated responsibilities, as a minimum, will have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of CLA and CPLA
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's: -
  - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
  - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep CLA and CPLA safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst CLA and CPLA.
- Ensuring CLA and CPLA have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the termly report to evaluate the progress of CLA in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the Headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis
- Supporting the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of CLA and CPLA are met.
- Reviewing the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years

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### 4.2 The Virtual School Head (VSH)

The Virtual School Head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's CLA, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the Designated Teachers understand the support available to CLA and CPLA.
- Working with the school to ensure all CLA in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for CLA.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of CPLA as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for CLA
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
  - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the CLA and CPLA who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
  - Inform the headteacher and Designated Teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the Local Authority.
  - Ensure Social Workers, schools, Designated Teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
  - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CLA
  - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision

### 4.3 All staff

All staff will:

- Have a clear understanding of the issues that affect CLA and CPLA; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality
- Have high expectations of CLA and CPLA's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour.
- Understand how important it is to see CLA and CPLA as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their CLA or CPLA status.
- Appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported.
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of Social Workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.

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- For CPLA, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

### **5. Role of the Designated Teacher:**

#### **5.1 Leadership responsibilities**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be the central point of initial contact along with the Safeguarding Lead within Exhall Grange Specialist School.
- Delegate responsibilities, where appropriate, to Assistant Head Teachers, Safeguarding Lead, and trained experienced members of staff who work closely with CLA and CPLA
- Promote the educational achievement of every CLA and CPLA by:
  - Working with Virtual schools
  - Promote a whole-school culture where the needs of these pupils matter are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
  - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
  - 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 CPLA
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 CPLA
- Work directly with CLA and CPLA and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding CLA and CPLA are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of Child previously looked-after in decisions affecting their child's education

#### **5.2 Supporting Child Looked After**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Make a Child Looked After's PEP 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 Child Looked After's attainment progresses under their PEPs
- 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
- Ensuring the identified actions of PEPs are put in place

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- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils ensuring that:
- A Child Looked After's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan; this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered
- 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 Child Looked After and Child Previously Looked After

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of CLA and CPLA are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding
- Access training and keeping up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and CLA and CPLA other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of CLA and CPLA, and how to support them
- Liaise with Virtual schools to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for CLA can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of CPLA children about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging parents to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support CPLA
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus 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 CPLA in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any Education, Health and Care Plan(EHCP) that a CLA has
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in CLA and CPLA and how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of CPLA

### 5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The Designated Teacher will:



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- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of CLA and CPLA
- 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 CPLA and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as Virtual Schools
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for CLA, 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 Virtual Schools when a CLA is 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 CLA moves school, their new Designated Teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- Seek advice from Virtual Schools about meeting the needs of individual CPLA , but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each Child Looked After :
  - There's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer 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 exclusion:

- Contact the Virtual School as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
- Working with the Virtual Schools 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

Where a CPLA is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the Virtual School on avoiding exclusion

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### **6. Safeguarding**

The school recognises that many CLA and CPLA have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst CLA and CPLA as soon as possible.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any concerns they have over CLA and CPLA in line with the schools Safeguarding Policy.

### **7. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following Exhall Grange Specialist Schools policies and procedures:

Behaviour Policy

Child protection and safeguarding