

CLA/PCLA Policy

Challney High School for Boys



Action	Date
Reviewed and amended	March 2025
Approved by Local Governing Body	Summer 1
Next Review Date	Summer 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked-after by them.
 - A child who is looked-after by a local authority (referred to as a looked-after child) as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989 means a child (0-18 years of age) who is subject to a care order (or an interim care order) or who is accommodated by the local authority. This duty also applies to 'eligible' children and to those who have been placed for adoption
- 1.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act 1989 to require local authorities in England to appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked-after children, wherever they live or are educated.
- 1.3 Social workers, Virtual School Heads (VSHs), Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) school admission officers, and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) departments should work together to ensure that, except in an emergency, appropriate education provision for a child is arranged at the same time as a care placement.
- 1.4 All looked-after children should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is part of the child's care plan or detention placement plan. The PEP is initiated by the social worker and should be maintained by the School, specifically the designated teacher for LAC, in conjunction with relevant professionals.

2. WHY LOOKED-AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN NEED EXTRA SUPPORT

- 2.1 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 (SEN). 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 SEN, needs careful assessment and planning. Excellent practice in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children already exists in many schools. To achieve this the designated teacher role is statutory in every school.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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. Within the local authority, the Virtual School Head (VSH) will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the School, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role. The VSH must be an officer employed by the authority or another local authority in England.
- 2.4 Schools have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to

reach their full educational potential - an important part of why this role has been made statutory.

3. PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN

3.1 Local authorities have a duty under section 2322A of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in their area by providing information and advice to:

- any person that has parental responsibility for the child;
- providers of funded early years education, designated teachers for previously looked-after children in maintained schools and academies;
- any other person the authority considers appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of relevant children.

3.2 Previously looked-after children are those who:

- are no longer looked-after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order;
- where adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

4. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

4.1 The Designated Governors for CLA/PCLA are Mrs Nazia Ahmed and Mr Imran Khan.

The governing body, head teacher and school leadership team will consider the following in supporting the designated teacher and school staff by reviewing:

- appropriate seniority and skills to work with the School's senior leadership and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and act as a champion for them, providing leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of individuals;
- training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including a good knowledge of SEN;
- contribute to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve;

- resource implications in supporting the designated teacher to carry out their role;
- expertise called on within/outside the School such as SENCO, health and mental health support.

4.2 The designated teacher will do this by providing the governing body, specifically the governor in charge of CLA, with a regular report.

5. THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED-AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN

5.1 The designated teacher of CLA/PCLA is Toni Gordon - Behaviour SLE.

5.2 The designated teacher is the central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

5.3 The designated teacher will take the lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students.

5.4 This means making sure that all staff:

- have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- are 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 looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 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 of how they are being supported;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;

- 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 or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

5.5 The designated teacher will have a more direct role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:

- looked-after and previously looked-after children are not disadvantaged;
- effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care has been implemented;
- effective procedures are in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
- particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground - e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
- thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and development;
- when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus (PP+);
- there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its students (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings).

5.6 The School will promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children have a voice and are:

- able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- prioritised in any selection of students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
- encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;

- empowered to believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs;
- can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.

5.7 The designated teacher will be a source of advice for teachers about:

- differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual students who are looked-after or previously looked-after children;
- progress of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there;
- working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians promoting good home-school links to support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication. This will ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home and are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy;
- encouraging high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.

6. RAISING AWARENESS AND STAFF TRAINING

6.1 A key part of the designated teacher's role is ensuring that they, and other school staff, have strong awareness, training and skills around the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and how to support them. The designated teacher should ensure that teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children with regards to, among other things:

- special educational needs
- attendance and exclusions
- homework
- choosing GCSE options
- understanding and managing any challenging behaviour
- promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- supporting children to be aspirational for their future education
- training and employment and career planning
- understanding the link between emotional wellbeing and making educational progress.

6.2 Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are significantly more likely to have SEN than their peers. Of those with SEN, a significant proportion will have Education, Health and Care Plans, other children with SEN will have their needs met through school SEN support. The School will follow the Special

Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice 0 to 25 years (2014), in relation to identifying SEN needs and ensure that the child's PEP works in harmony with their EHC plan to, coherently and comprehensively, set out how their needs are being met.

- 6.3 Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues rather than their peers.

They may struggle with executive functioning skills:

- forming trusting relationships
- social skills
- managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger)
- sensory processing difficulties
- foetal alcohol syndrome and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- coping with transitions and change

- 6.4 This can impact on their behaviour and education. The School has an important role in ensuring staff can identify signs of potential issues and understand where specialist services, such as CAMHS and educational psychologists can be utilised. Currently, a child's mental health can be gauged through the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ is a clinically validated brief behavioural screening questionnaire for use with 4-17 year-olds or 2-4 year-olds. This will play a part in informing the child's care and the PEP.

- 6.5 It is important for the child to be able to identify trusted adults they can go to for assistance and for those adults to be able to support the child directly or engage relevant professionals. This does not need to be the designated teacher but they should be kept informed.

7. PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS (PP+)

- 7.1 Looked-after children and children adopted from care, on a special guardianship or child arrangements order are eligible for PP+ funding. This additional funding is provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children and close the attainment gap between this group and their peers. All pupil premium spending should take account of the specific needs of eligible pupils. The extra funding provided by the PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by looked-after and previously looked-after children.

- 7.2 For looked-after children, PP+ funding is managed by the VSH for the purpose of supporting their educational achievement. The VSH and schools, including the designated teacher, should work together to agree how this funding can most effectively be used to improve looked-after children's attainment. All PEPs include information about how the looked-after child is benefitting from the use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.
- 7.3 For previously looked-after children, PP+ funding is managed by the School. The amount a school receives is based on the number of eligible children recorded in the School's annual January School Census return to the Department for Education.
- 7.4 For both looked-after and previously looked-after children PP+ is not a personal budget for individual children. The VSH and the School manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked-after or previously looked-after children and according to children's needs. The PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for looked-after and previously looked-after children. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence based and in the best interests of the child. It is important that the School involves parents, carers and guardians in discussions around the PP+ allocation.

8. THE PEP AND ITS IMPORTANCE

- 8.1 All looked-after children must have a care plan. This is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority responsible for the child. It should identify intended outcomes and objectives for the child and provide the framework to work with the child and carers in relation to their emotional and behavioural development, identity, relationships and self-care skills. The care plan must also include a health plan and a PEP.
- 8.2 The PEP is a record of the child's education and training. It describes what needs to happen for a looked-after child to help them fulfil their potential and reflect, but not duplicate, any existing plans such as EHC plans. The PEP is a vital document because it provides a 'collective memory' about the child's education. It is an integral part of a looked-after child's wider care plan. In Luton the PEP is held electronically on a virtual platform which can be accessed by relevant professionals. The EPEP, in addition to being part of the overall care plan, is part of a looked-after child's official school record. If a child moves school, the EPEP will be forwarded as a matter of urgency, along with other school records, to the new school when known, and to the main contact (usually the child's social worker) in the local authority which looks after the child. The EPEP should help everyone gain the clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision necessary to ensure academic progress and meet the child's educational needs, describing how that will be provided. The EPEP will be reviewed and maintained on a termly basis.

8.3 Areas for consideration in the PEP are:

- Achievement records
 - Development needs
 - Long term plans and aspirations
 - Educational data informing progress
 - Evidence of effective use of PP+
 - Extended learning opportunity
 - Involvement in extra-curricular activities
 - **SEND** (if any)
- Attendance
 - Behaviour