



# Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Last Reviewed	May 2022
Next Review Date	May 2024
Ratified by the Trustee Board	May 2023

# Designated teacher for Children Looked-After (CLA) and Previously Children Looked After (PCLA)

## 1 Aim

Horsforth School recognises that educational achievement is important for **all** students. We will work closely with the Local Authority, Parents/Carers and Social Care to ensure that students who are 'Children Looked After' feel secure and adopt a positive attitude to study whilst at school in order to ensure they fulfil their potential. It is important that, as far as is possible, students who are 'Children Looked After' should be treated no differently from any other student. Their academic and pastoral progress is monitored carefully. We also carefully monitor the progress of those students who are Previously Children Looked After (PCLA) when we are made aware of this ensuring they too are equipped for success.

## 2 Context

Educational achievement and 'Personal Development' is important for all students, but for those who are 'Children Looked After' (CLA) it is even more crucial in terms of ensuring they have the tools necessary to succeed in life where perhaps those opportunities are limited somewhat by their earlier experiences.

Raising the achievement of those students depends largely on the effective co-operation of the home setting, Social Care and the Educational setting.

Many of these students will have experienced abuse of some kind. Nationally, students who are 'Children Looked After' (CLA) are prone to underachievement and at high risk of exclusion.

We recognise that these students, as a result of their experiences, may struggle with personal, social as well as academic achievement; many may also have additional learning needs (SEND).

Students must be given every opportunity to thrive alongside their peers and reach their potential. School can often play a major part in creating stability in the lives of these young people, many of whom have lacked this previously and it plays a vital role in promoting and ensuring the wellbeing of these students in our care.

We must work in partnership with the Local Authority, Parents / Carers and Social Care to plan effectively for the education of children in care.

We need to encourage excellent attendance and consistently improving performance across a whole range of school activities and maintain high expectations of and for those students.

We must ensure that we have effective practices to promote the education of 'Children Looked After' including:

- An appointed Designated Teacher for 'Children Looked After' who is trained and had responsibility for oversight of the education of these children
- All children who are CLA will have a PEP drawn up in conjunction with school, Parents/Carers and Social Workers as well as other relevant professionals
- All children will have access to a 'broad and balanced curriculum'
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices for monitoring purposes will be in place
- Appropriate personal, academic and careers guidance is available and students are supported to use these
- Student voice will be sought throughout and acted upon where appropriate and applicable

- Effective transition practices for moving on to the next stage of education Post 16 or into the world of work

Established strategies to maintain and develop good behaviour, attendance and punctuality; effectively communicated to all parties

- Robust and appropriate systems for arranging specialist support/advice to be sought such as liaison with the Educational Psychologist, Attendance Strategy Lead or conducting various student referrals to specialist services and external agencies
- Students are actively encouraged to partake in opportunities available to them to include trips, visits and extra-curricular clubs and supported with these where appropriate
- The school will only know if a child is Previously a Child Looked After (PCLA), if we have been notified by the Parents/Carers at admission to the school.

### **3 Evaluation**

This policy will be evaluated annually by the Trustee Board to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Circumstances may require more frequent modifications.

### **4 Authors**

This policy has been updated by Katie McFadden in May 2023.

### **5 Procedures**

Procedures to support this policy are appended as follows:

Appendix 1 - Definition

Appendix 2 - Procedures

## **Appendix I      Definition**

The Children Act 1989 section 22 introduced the term ‘Looked After’ to describe children and young people *whose care is entrusted to the local authority* either by orders made by the court or with the agreement of those who have parental responsibility for the child.

Some ‘Children Looked After’ are placed in children’s homes throughout the city, some are placed with extended family and some are placed in, or are moving towards, independent living situations within the community, but the majority are placed in foster care.

The importance of recognising the particular needs of ‘Children Looked After’ was stressed in “Every Child Matters” initially in 2003.

Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 schools have a duty to designate a teacher to promote the welfare and educational achievement of children who are no longer in care. A student who is Previously a Child Looked After (PCLA) is one who is no longer looked after because she/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship order or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child will live.

## Appendix 2: Procedures

### I School responsibilities:-

#### The school will:

- Ensure staff know the names of 'Children Looked After' who attend the school
- Have a nominated member of staff (the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After) responsible for overseeing the education of these students
- Have been consulted by the Social Care department about the 'Care plan' for each student and have a copy of any relevant care plans. If contact is not established by Social Care, the school will initiate contact
- Ensure CP records are kept up to date on CPOMS
- Ensure appropriate levels of communication with Social Worker and Parents/carers about all aspects of the child's education
- Send a representative to attend meetings about the education and care of the student; Personal Education Plan and Child Looked After review meetings
- Understand the respective roles of carers and parents and check with the social worker if in doubt over parental responsibility
- Liaise with Virtual Schools, and Social Care, including locating services for students, obtaining key contacts etc.
- Ensure school policies and procedures are sensitive to children's needs i.e. equipment at home
- Ensure close liaison with Academic, Pastoral, CP and SEND teams will take place where appropriate, in conjunction with the Virtual School, Parents/Carers and Social Care in supporting the child's needs
- Make efforts to gather information on those students who are PCLA prior to them joining Horsforth School. This is not automatically shared and is requested at time of entry. The Parent/Carer will be asked for this information and it is their responsibility to provide the information and supporting evidence should they wish to. Supporting evidence will be requested so that appropriate funding can be sought to support students in school.

Liaise with, and refer to appropriate services for supporting the child and identifying need

- Support the development of a Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviewed termly in conjunction with home, Social Care and a number of staff, to address realistic challenges and academic targets, which may include:
  - ◆ Curriculum Leaders providing evidence of the student's progress in all subjects (progress review data)
  - ◆ the relevant Year co-ordinator, Pastoral and Behaviour Officer and the Form Tutor regarding wider school involvement and achievement
  - ◆ Support from careers guidance staff to include CV writing and support with work experience and applications for next steps
  - ◆ Working with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator) regarding identification and support for students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Ensure that 'Children Looked After' are:
  - ◆ Treated equally regardless of their background or personal circumstances
  - ◆ Provided with stability and consistency
  - ◆ Protected from harm – the school must be aware of child protection plans
  - ◆ Informed about decisions which affect them and wherever possible involved in the decision-making process

Encouraged and supported: there should be an expectation that potential will be achieved

## **2 The Responsibility of the Designated Teacher :**

- List the names of students who are 'Looked After' and record the names, addresses and contact numbers of the carers associated with them-share this information with staff on SIMS
- Have oversight of the pupils known to the school to be PCLA
- Be the key contact for the Virtual School
- Attend Virtual school training where relevant and necessary
- Provide data at collection points for the Virtual School on request (termly)
- Have a copy of the 'care plan', PEP and latest CLA review notes for each student and initiate contact with Social Care if the school is not provided with this
- Contact the Social Worker if there is doubt over the position of parents and other family members such as grandparents and keep contact details up to date
- Attend PEP and CLA review meetings and collate information for the independent reviewing officer as required
- Liaise with Social Worker and home regularly
- Liaise with the relevant Year Coordinator and Pastoral and Behaviour Officer on the provision for the student
- Liaise with staff on any provisions needed to ensure students can meet their potential
- Maintain up to date records for the 'Child Looked After' and ensure these are transferred to other settings at transition points; ensure that sensitive or confidential material is closely restricted
- Involve the Parent/Carer/Social Worker in issues/problems that crop up and invite the carer to relevant meetings (the carer may be the foster parent or the key worker [for students in residential care])
- Liaise with the Pastoral Team and Attendance Strategy Leader over any attendance or related issues.
- Ensure the Pastoral Team liaises with Social Worker around any pastoral issues they need to be aware of
- Ensure the Pastoral Team develops good contact and relationships with the child and the Parents/Carers/Social Workers
- Liaise with the Deputy Headteacher; Pastoral over any relevant training for those significantly involved with 'Children Looked After'.
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- Ensure students have what they need in order to succeed-this may include basic equipment, uniform etc
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- Act as a source of advice for teachers teaching and supporting these students

## **3 Role of the Pastoral Year Teams; Year Coordinator (YC) and Pastoral Behaviour Officer (PBO):**

- Know the 'Children Looked After' in the year group as well as those who are PCLA
- Monitor progress in all areas and inform Designated Teacher of concerns
- Liaise with relevant staff about support for the students; Careers, Attendance, behaviour etc
- Attend PEP/CLA reviews and other relevant meetings and provide data/reports as/when necessary.
- Keep the Designated teacher CLA informed of any concerns and or developments where relevant.
- Maintain close home/school liaison
- Liaise with Social worker where appropriate
- Update pastoral/academic support plans for the student who is CLA

## **4 Role of the Form Tutor:**

- Know the 'Children Looked After' and PCLA in the form group
- Monitor progress and inform Pastoral Team of concerns
- Provide information for reports/reviews as/when required.
- Establish and maintain links with home/school as advised by Designated Teacher CLA

## **5 The Role of the Parent/Carer:**

- Inform the school of PCLA status and supporting evidence on entry where agreed suitable
- Inform the school of illnesses and monitor attendance in line with school expectation and policy/procedures
- Monitor progress in other areas using SIMS APP and email communication
- Provide equipment needed and liaise with Year Teams and Designated teacher for support where needed
- Provide a suitable environment for homework and monitor this
- Attend relevant meetings including staff consultation evenings.
- Support school in maintaining standards; keeping expectations high with regards to attendance, punctuality, behaviour and learning.

## **6 Role of Social Care Department:**

- Draw up and monitor the care plan after consultation with the relevant parties and share with school
- Inform school of the status and position of parents/carers including contact arrangements
- Provide school with the basic information of the primary carers e.g. name, address, contact numbers and inform school of any changes
- Chair statutory reviews where the student's progress and the suitability of the care plan are assessed; CLA reviews and PEP meetings
- Call a statutory review 28 days after commencement of a placement, within a further 3 months and thereafter at intervals of 6 months. [Liaise where possible with the SEN review dates].
- Initiate and invite relevant parties to PEP meetings and CLA reviews
- Provide school with CLA review and PEP paperwork on completion

## **7 Role of Head Teacher and Trustees:**

- Oversee the policy for 'Children Looked After' and 'Previously Children Looked After'.

## **8 Procedure for planning the education of 'Children Looked After' and 'Previously Children Looked After':**

- Social Care informs school that a student has been placed in their care or with foster carers or is no longer in care
- Discussion between carers, Designated safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Designated Teacher for 'Children Looked After' will take place
- Appropriate staff are made aware of the situation e.g. Form Tutor and Pastoral Team
- Teaching staff are notified of any relevant information via staff briefing or email (as deemed suitable)
- SIMS and CPOMS updated
- A care plan is formulated by Social Care and is copied for the School if a child has become CLA.
- A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is developed by the social worker in conjunction with the Designated teacher and relevant members of staff are made aware of provision plans. This usually happens in school. This plan is reviewed every term.

## **9 Planning for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Those students who are 'Children Looked After', 'Previously Children Looked After' and have Special Education Needs and Disabilities should be known to the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (SENDco), as outlined in procedures in the Code of Practice. Where necessary, action should be taken in accordance with the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. There are specific times and stages at which formal collaboration between agencies and departments is required. The involvement of the social worker or carer and teachers is particularly important.