

Looked After Children Policy



Love, Learn and Shine Together With Jesus

Written: March 2022

Date of Review: March 2024

Leader: Mrs C Sime

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

Aims

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CLA as for all children.
 - Ensure that all CLA have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. This should be a differentiated curriculum reflecting the individual's needs and ability.
 - Ensure that CLA pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
 - Ensure that carers and social workers of CLA pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment with regular home-school contact.
 - Ensure that CLA pupils are involved, where practical, in decisions affecting their future provision.
- Designated teacher for CLA

The designated teacher for CLA is Mrs T Gaskell (Inclusion Manager) with support from other members of the Safeguarding Team.

The Governing Body

The governor with responsibility for CLA is Mr R Burke. An annual report will be presented to the Governing Body to review the policy, procedures and practice relating to our looked after children.

See Appendix 1 - Roles and Responsibilities

Who are Children Looked After?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

All these groups are said to be 'Children Looked After -CLA. They may be looked after by our school local authority or may be in the care of another authority but currently resident in Liverpool LA.

Admissions policy

The Governing Body believes that the admissions criteria should not discriminate against CLA pupils. Due to care placement changes, CLA may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad based curriculum. Our CLA policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all CLA pupils.

Allocation of resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Monitoring the progress of CLA

The local authority which looks after him or her must ensure that the designated teacher receives the PEP. This should be pre-populated with basic information. This should include information about:

- The child's details that the school needs to know – such as age; care status; where the child lives; school history and whether the child has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or are having their SEN met through school support.
- The child's carers;
- The child's parents and what restrictions might apply in relation to their contact with the child;
- Whom to contact within the local authority that looks after the child (social worker and looked after children education team contact).

If a child has been looked after for some time, the PEP should include information about educational progress and how s/he learns best.

Children who are already looked after when they join the school should have an existing PEP. This should be transferred to the child's new school. If the local authority has not provided the most recent PEP, the designated teacher should make sure that this is followed up with the authority which looks after the child.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. CLA will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

See Appendix 2 – the PEP

Record Keeping

The designated teacher will know who are all the CLA in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. Her/she will also know about any CLA from other authorities. It is important that the school flags CLA status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required. Careful tracking ensure Pupil Premium funding is allocated appropriately.

School will attend all CLA Reviews and planning meetings in relation to Pupil Premium/PEP.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support CLA. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with CLA.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable CLA to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting CLA. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual CLA:

- VIRTUAL SCHOOLS
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHs
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service

CLA policy review and evaluation

We consider the CLA policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of our practice each year. The policy will be reviewed in line with any procedural changes.

APPENDIX 1

Roles and responsibilities

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Looked After Children – CLA - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- Underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect.

To date the outcomes achieved by CLA have been unacceptably poor.

As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for CLA within school
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for CLA on both the CLA and the rest of the school community
- Know all the CLA in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about CLA
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CLA, seeking advice from the social worker/CLAES when appropriate.
- ensure that CLA receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- Ensure that all CLA have an appropriate PEP and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Discuss the use of pupil premium with the social worker, carer and young person
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal
- Information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to CLA
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for a CLA
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a CLA transfers to another educational placement
- Contribute information to CLA reviews when required
- Report to the Governing body on CLA in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- Prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
 - ♣ The number of CLA on roll and the confirmation that they have a PEP.
 - ♣ Their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - ♣ Their attainment (SATs) compared to other pupils.
 - ♣ The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.

♣ The destinations of pupils who leave the school.

- Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of CLA.
- Arrange a key person to whom the young person can talk to
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. CLA are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- Follow school procedures.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a CLA's progress.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of CLA.
- Work to raise the self-esteem of a CLA.
- Ensure any CLA is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on CLA and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a CLA is experiencing difficulties
- Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports available when required.

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria makes appropriate provision for CLA
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for CLA who liaises with the headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of CLA are met
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give CLA equal access in respect of:
 - ♣ Admission to school
 - ♣ National Curriculum and examinations and extra-curricular activities.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings of CLA.

The Local Authority will:

- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for CLA.
- Ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other pupil.
- Ensure that CLA receive a full time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible.
- Ensure that every CLA has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Liverpool from another authority.
- Make sure that each CLA has a PEP according to national guidance.
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for CLA and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training.
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate.
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible.

- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 & 2.
- Support CLA through VIRTUAL SCHOOL.
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of CLA and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs.

Local Authority contact for VIRTUAL SCHOOL:

Carolyn.Lawler1@liverpool.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2

PEP Guidance (Liverpool)

- The attendance of the Social Worker at all PEP meetings is compulsory.
- The attendance of the carer should be encouraged. A report will be generated three monthly and any carer that does not attend on two consecutive occasions is to be contacted by the Fostering Service.
- An invitation to the parents, if they are not the main carer, is at the discretion of the Social Worker.
- Although the targets on the pupil views form should inform the meeting they are not necessarily the targets that are eventually set.
- Academic levels need to be included as a copy of the school's academic tracking.
- The social worker represents the Local Authority in their duty to pass on the PEP when there is a change of academic placement.
- The PEP will automatically go to the CLA Review Unit so will be available for all CLA reviews.
- If a young person is on the role of the school, even if attending an alternative provision, the PEP is still the responsibility of the school.
- If a young person attends a school that is out of borough it is the social worker that completes the on line PEP.
- The PEP of any young person not on role will be completed by the CLAES team.
- Please make sure that the e mail address that is given for the return of the PEP is a work address due to confidentiality issues.

PEP Flow Chart

School arranges the meeting, this includes – social worker, pupil, carer and any other appropriate adult. The parent is invited at the discretion of the Social Worker.



Prior to the meeting the school along with the pupil fill in the Pupil Views Form. The targets from this should be used to inform the main meeting.



The meeting is chaired by the School who fills in the PEP form. Academic tracking is attached to the form.



The school completes the form and distributes the PEP and Pupil Views Form to the young person (if appropriate), the carer and the social worker. Parents should also receive a copy if appropriate.



The PEP form is submitted online (Liverpool – check Knowsley procedure). Social worker puts a copy in the young person's file.