



Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School

Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After (PLA) Policy

Review Date:	June 2021
Next Review Date:	June 2022
Committee:	LFL
Reviewed by:	Antonia Onyeze, Sarah Pike and Penny Dent

Policy Objective:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PLA) on the roll of Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School.

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLA

Mrs. Antonia Onyeze
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Name of the Designated School Governors for CLA and PLA

Mrs. Penny Dent and Mrs. Sarah Pike
.....

At Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School we will create an environment where children looked after (CLA) and children previously looked after (PLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the *‘DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018.*

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for CLA and PLA and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote whole school staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA and PLA experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise. We understand the need to work in a ‘relationship-based’ way and have a therapeutic approach to behavior management so that children looked after and previously looked after feel valued and a part of our school community.

Our school community aims to champion the needs of all children, including CLA and PLA, to ensure they make rapid educational and social progress during their period in care on the roll at this school.

Equality and Diversity statement

This policy is intended to be helpful for improvement in the education available for all learners but has a focus on children looked after who, statistically, experience disadvantage in education. The criteria are clear that the expectation is that all learners receive a high-quality, ambitious education; that providers are inclusive of all learners; and that all providers must be meeting their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010 and all protected characteristics therein.

An inclusive learning environment in which everybody is respected is conducive to a happy and healthy learning environment.

The Virtual School Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Toolkit training will be delivered to support a greater understanding of diversity and equality and is relevant to many children particularly those returning to school following periods of lockdown or similar situations.

Coronavirus response:

We have reviewed the Virtual School Recovery Curriculum presentation and will deliver the Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Toolkit training to all school staff and will develop a school response based on the principles promoted in both. We will also prepare an action

plan to ensure that the whole school takes a holistic approach to well-being. This will help to create an ethos where all of those working within the school feel confident in reporting and evidencing issues relating to equality and diversity. Promoting an inclusive environment is key to the well-being of all pupils as is a commitment to deepening pupils' understanding of "democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance" (Ofsted 2019).

NB. This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with the Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School CLA and PLA Guidance Note (see Annex A, attached).

For the purposes of this policy document, we are assuming that children under Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) are included with the title PLA.

Our Aims for CLA:

- to provide a safe and secure environment where educational progress and stability is always central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of CLA and PLA
- to narrow the gap between the attainment of CLA and PLA and their peers, ensuring **accelerated** and **rapid** progress
- that they benefit from school-based interventions, even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*) and to use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- for all CLA to have at least termly Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings each academic year and for the joint planning and quality first teaching to have measurable impact on each child's learning on a daily basis (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*)
- for all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, adopting a relationship-based approach and with one key adult with whom the child has a trusted relationship and who will act as an advocate for them and take a special interest in their progress in all school activities
- that school systems facilitate discrete support, that includes a strong relationship between school staff, carers and children looked after on roll
- CLA will be advantaged within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018.*) CLA are specifically mentioned in our school's Child Protection Policy.
- Our Behaviour Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour but we understand that not all behaviour is a matter of choice. We will not enforce sanctions that shame and ostracise children looked after from their peers, school, community or family. In this school we seek to create an inclusive and positive school ethos for every pupil.
- CLA and PLA and their families will feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged into this school community (*DfE Desig-*

nated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018).

Educational Planning for Children Looked After

Personal Education Plans (ePEP) and CLA Self Evaluation Forms (CLASEF):

The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals. In any one school year there will be at least 3 PEP meetings for each CLA. The school will complete the all sections of the CLASEF to share our plan for improvement and development in school for disadvantaged children and also to inform the Hertfordshire Virtual School of the school's policy and practice, to account for the efficient and effective spend of the PP+ funding and to inform the school Governing Body, as the annual report.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role and have at least 2 days per year training to remain fully informed. They will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and PLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receives appropriate training.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is Mrs. Antonia Onyeze She is a qualified teacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA by:

- ensuring that the CLA or PLA has access to quality first teaching
- tracking the progress of CLA and PLA across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book reflections
- ensuring that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA, including attachment theory, and trauma informed practice
- when relevant, delivering the Virtual School training: "An introduction to Attachment Aware and Trauma-informed Practice" to the whole school
- providing and attending training and offering advice to the whole school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for CLA and PLA
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of CLA and PLA and school resource and staff training needs for working with this group
- prioritising CLA for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously*

looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018)

- ensuring that CLA and PLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- completing the annual Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) of each CLA as requested, to inform their annual CLA health review.

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA by:

- reading this 'school policy' and 'school policy guidance document' for CLA
- attending relevant training, including the Virtual School toolkit training on 'Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed practice' to be found on the Virtual School website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher
- referring to the Designated Teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating an attachment and trauma-informed 'CLA-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for CLA and PLA by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available

Attendance:

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of CLA and PLA to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention, as outlined in the attendance policy.

Admissions/ Transitions:

School procedures to support CLA during admission and transition include:

- prioritising CLA and PLA at the point of admission
- the swift transfer of information between schools which may include school visits at times of transition, as well as conversations between the previous and next teacher.
- visits to the previous school/EYFS setting before transition where practical, to meet and if appropriate, teach the child to help them get to know their new teacher.
- early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy (as appropriate)
- additional support and planning for CLA and PLA at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

Additional Educational Needs:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and PLA with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria (*in line with the DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*)

- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight (*in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09*)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed against the targets set, as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, ePEP and CLASEF

Special Educational Needs:

All staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and PLA who have special educational needs & disabilities by:

- having high expectation of progress each academic year (*in line with the expectation set out in the ePEP and CLA-SEF*)
- ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal provision and additional needs provision (*in line with the SEN Code of Practice*)
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight
- That with the school SENCO the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CLA and PLA by: familiarising themselves with the 'School Policy Guidance for Children in Care' and following the school's child protection policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' (All staff) June 2019, if there are any safeguarding concerns. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Alternative Provision:

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision alternative to daily attendance at school will be:

- a plan that will retain the CLA on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for essential reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall ePEP for the student
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the CLA or PLA
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that ePEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

Exclusion:

- We have reviewed the school behaviour policy (April 2021) in line with the statutory guidance published in February 2018 (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and*

previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018).

- We will make every effort to avoid excluding a CLA, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School.
- As with all children at school, we will use all means available to us to avoid excluding a child looked after or previously looked after;
- If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion.
- School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of CLA and PLA. CLA and PLA with special educational needs should have exclusion as a behaviour management action as a last possible resort (*Regulation 4(1)(c) of the Equalities Act 2010 which means that a head teacher could only lawfully exclude a child for a reason relating to their disability, even a disability that results in the child having a tendency to physical abuse, if reasonable adjustments have been made*).

Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will make every effort to develop positive professional relationships with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA and PLA.

The Headteacher, Designated Teacher and Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed in the Statutory Guidance and practice outlined in this policy.

Date June 2021

Review Date June 2022

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After

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June 2021

Annex A - Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School CLA and PLA Guidance Note June 2021

This guidance note is designed to be read in conjunction with the Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After (PLA) Policy, dated June 2021.

The role of the designated teacher for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After includes:

Work with Individual Children Looked After and Previously Looked After:

- To discuss with individual children, where appropriate alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances (life story) that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils. Continue this dialogue with children and parents / carers as developments occur. Adoptive parents to share 'life story' of child/ren if appropriate.
- To develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers. Find, use and develop tools and strategies to help children to help themselves.

School Responsibility

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority (or has been adopted) and that this may mean particular sensitivities towards some topics at school, or at certain times of the year. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is in care (or has been adopted) only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person. In conjunction with a child's carers, it may be decided that this information can be shared further, if it is in the best interests of the child.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class, and in certain situations it might also be appropriate for information to be shared with relevant classroom support assistants. If possible, the child and their carer should be informed of this change in a timely manner, especially if it is thought necessary to help the child prepare for the change. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head Teacher or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

Involvement of the Young Person

In consultation with parents / carers, it is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding, especially bearing in mind that we are an Infant and Nursery School. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan (ePEP) by the Designated Teacher to inform the ePEP and Care Plan review meetings.

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.