



# Looked After Children Policy

ADOPTED AT THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ON 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016

*Bob Downing*

Signed: Chair of Governors

ADOPTED AT THE MEETING OF THE RLT BOARD ON 11<sup>th</sup> JULY 2016

To be reviewed every 3 years



Local authorities have a specific duty, under the Children Act 1989, to promote the educational achievement of all looked after children. To measure their success in this, local authorities should aim for children at every age to achieve educational outcomes comparable to their peers and to encourage them to have high expectations for themselves in order to achieve their full potential. (DfE)

## Key Aims

The school aims to:

- Ensure that the school policies and procedures are followed for CLA as for all children.
- Ensure that all CLA have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum as appropriate to the individual's needs and ability.
- Ensure that CLA students take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of CLA students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensure that CLA students are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Children Looked After have a right to expect the outcomes we want for every child. All schools and settings have a role in supporting the local authority to achieve the highest possible educational standards and outcomes for all Children Looked After, irrespective of their placing authority.

Our school understands and supports the premise that as **Corporate Parents** we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education for Children Looked After.

Our school ensures there is a common understanding amongst all staff of the needs of Children Looked After, and, staff are supported in identifying their areas of strength and their capacity to improve in their work with Children Looked After.

### 1. The Role of the Designated Teacher

**The Assistant Head teacher with responsibility for Pastoral Care is the named Designated Teacher (DT) for Children Looked After, who has full Qualified Teacher Status, is in a position of authority, and, is able to influence and challenge school policy and practice. The designated Teacher operates in accordance with the statutory duties as set out in the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. The day to day co-ordination of support for children looked after is delegated to Mrs K Hughes, the Student Support Manager.**

- 1.1** The DT acts as an advocate for the educational needs of Children Looked After.
- 1.2** The head teacher ensures the DT has sufficient time allocated in order to carry out their duties in supporting Children Looked After, their carers and social care staff.
- 1.3** The DT and the Head teacher (HT) maintain and update the lists of CLA on the school roll. The list provides accurate contact information, legal status, type of care placement, social worker's details, placing authority details (in the case of a Child from other Local Authority – COLA) etc including the name of the Virtual Head as appropriate. The DT ensures that all staff are aware of individual Children Looked After on roll in School.
- 1.4** The DT makes every effort to get to know the child/young person and will attend CLA Reviews and other essential meetings whenever possible: when necessary, the DT will ensure attendance at such meetings by an appropriate deputy and ensures feedback and staff updates as appropriate.
- 1.5** The DT ensures that all CLA have a current, purposeful and meaningful PEP (Personal Education Plan) in place and that the child participates fully in the development of the PEP.
- 1.6** The DT works with the child's social worker to ensure timely review of the PEP and supports distribution of the completed plan to all relevant parties.
- 1.7** The DT is responsible for ensuring that accurate information re CLA on roll is conveyed at Census time to the local authority.
- 1.8** The DT is responsible for collating the information re CLA Delegated funding spend and for accessing Pupil Premium funding for individual children identified in the Personal Education Plan targets.
- 1.9** The DT is responsible for ensuring high quality information is formulated for HT use with SIPs, Ofsted, the SEF (or other self-evaluation mechanisms) etc.
- 1.10** The DT is proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise the attainment of all Children Looked After on roll.
- 1.11** The DT maintains an overview of CLA attendance and ensures the Virtual School Team are contacted if there are any concerns.
- 1.12** The DT ensures that the CLA attendance protocol is followed if a CLA reaches the threshold for attendance monitoring meeting.
- 1.13** The DT will promote and support the authority's position re holidays in term-time for CIC and will ensure that the HT has all necessary information should an approach be made by carers requesting any such authorisation. The DT ensures that reference is made to the child's social worker and Virtual School team prior to authorised absence being considered.
- 1.14** The DT works in partnership with the HT when considering Exclusions or other disciplinary measures for CLA, supporting the authority's position that formal exclusions for children in care must only be used as a last resort and only after having sought the views of

the Virtual school team and/or the inclusion team and, in accordance with the authority's policy in this matter.

**1.15** The DT is instrumental in collating attainment data for CLA and will use it to ensure the highest levels of achievement and attainment are promoted.

**1.16** The DT ensures the understanding of all staff regarding matters to do with CLA.

**1.17** The DT inducts new staff in such matters and regularly reviews the training needs for all staff.

**1.18** The DT is released for appropriate training as required (DT training, PEP training, associated safeguarding etc) and has opportunities to feedback to staff.

**1.19** The DT and each CLA agree together which key members of staff should be aware of their circumstances.

**1.20** The DT ensures that information is managed in a confidential manner, that records are kept, and that information is shared appropriately and in accordance with authority guidelines.

**1.21** The DT is mindful of potentially difficult periods in the child's life e.g. transition, change of care placement, SEN issues etc. and will ensure staff support and understanding as appropriate.

**1.22** The DT may wish to delegate certain responsibilities to other members of staff: whilst this may be practicable, the DT is mindful of their statutory duties and will always ensure appropriate line management and support for staff when undertaking delegated duties.

**1.23** The DT ensures that any SEN issues are dealt with appropriately, that referrals are timely and outcomes achievable. The DT will ensure that the PEP is updated and the child's social worker and carer are kept informed.

**1.24** The DT ensures priority is given to CLA in accessing in-school opportunities and equipment (e.g. Laptops) to boost learning e.g. 1:1 tuition, Homework Clubs etc.

**1.25** The DT will address any potential barriers to accessing these resources and will make strenuous efforts to ensure the child engages in any beneficial activities as appropriate.

**1.26** The DT ensures fair representation of CLA in prestigious positions e.g. prefects, form reps, pupil desk receptionist etc. and works with the virtual school team and gateway vulnerable team and others to ensure that appropriate support is given when choices need to be made e.g. Options, work experience choices, College applications etc.

**1.27** The DT ensures that all school staff is knowledgeable about the additional obstacles to be faced by CLA. They will support staff in raising the child's aspirations and ensure appropriate support access to careers advice.

## **2. Communication with Carers**

**The school ensures they establish good communication links with all carers/parents/residential home staff and ensure they are aware of school policies and procedures for CLA**

**2.1** The carer knows who the DT is and feels welcomed by the school and able to ask questions etc.

**2.2** The DT ensures that school gives information to the carers in a timely way and takes a proactive role in ensuring that both carer and pupil are aware of important deadlines e.g. Coursework, examination dates, Parents' Evenings etc.

**2.3** The DT ensures that information re trips, study guides etc is conveyed.

**2.4** The DT will also receive information from carers and others and ensures that it is recorded and processed appropriately.

**2.5** The DT understands the importance of the carer's role in partnership working and fosters a collaborative working relationship with both carers and parents (as appropriate).

**2.6** The DT understands the need for flexibility when timing contact with a carer and/or social worker.

## **3. Communication with Social Care & other agencies**

**The designated teacher will ensure all changes in the child's education are communicated directly to the social worker and any other involved agencies.**

**3.1** The DT promotes strong, positive, working relationships between social workers, health professionals and school staff involved with the CLA.

**3.2** The DT recognises the importance of effective communication with all professionals involved and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that information is effectively passed between agencies.

**3.3** The DT provides information as requested by social care colleagues or other professionals involved with the CLA.

**3.4** The DT will always be mindful of the child's legal status and will advise accordingly on the issue of **Parental Responsibility**.

**3.5** The DT will ensure they are clear who has parental responsibility and who has powers of authorisation via delegated responsibility from the social worker.

#### **4. Communication with the Virtual School Team**

**Every school has the opportunity to call on the help of the Virtual School Team through advice, training, attending meetings, PEP support and direct support for CLA. The DT can always contact VST via phone (0151 443 5310) or email (alexandra.roper@knowsley.gov.uk) to request this support. There is no formal referral process for this support. We also receive support from the VST from other borough for the students that attend from those areas.**

**4.1** The DT understands that the Virtual School Team (VST) is the primary source of information concerning educational issues and, equally, the team must be kept informed of any developments in the child's life which may impact on educational progress and attainment e.g. exclusions for behaviour, initial concerns etc.

**4.2** The DT will provide any information requested by VST colleagues or other professionals involved with the CLA.

**4.3** The DT ensures that the team is informed of any DT name change.

**4.4** The DT undertakes regular training, as offered by the VST, in line with statutory expectations. If this is not possible then the DT understands that 1:1 training, advice and support is always available from the VST.

**4.5** The DT will ensure that all information requested by education Business Intelligence Unit (EBIU) on behalf of VST will be given the deadlines set by EBIU to ensure the VST can track and monitor the progress of the Virtual School Population.

#### **5. The Role of the School's Governing Body**

**The Governing Body (GB) will support the DT and HT in carrying out their duties to support CLA. They will monitor support effective appropriate use of CLA funding as supported by Wigan's Elected members.**

**5.1** The GB has a duty to appoint the school's DT, ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and that the post holder has QTS. The GB has agreed a clear job description.

**5.2** The school has a named governor with responsibility for Children Looked After and the Local Authority's VST is kept informed of any change to the information. The Nominated Governor undertakes to attend CLA Governor Training as required.

**5.3** The GB is aware of the number of CLA on the school roll (and placing authority).

**5.4** The Nominated Governor meets regularly with the DT, as appropriate.

**5.5** The DT, supported by the headteacher, provides annual reports on the progress of CLA in school and any other issues pertaining to their status. These reports do not have any names or personal details of CLA.

**5.6** The GB ensures that the needs of CLA are recognised in all school policies.

**5.7** The GB has clear school policies for CLA in relation to admissions, exclusions and access to school based services and opportunities.

**5.8** The GB ensures that the DT workload is monitored and that he/she has sufficient capacity so that their statutory duties can be carried out effectively.

**5.9** The GB ensures that the DT is able to attend relevant meetings and training as required and as appropriate.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation.**

Designated staff will ensure that the Governors have access to and consider the CYPS Annual Report of the looked after child. This should be used as a baseline for comparing school's own results for their looked after children. This will include, where age appropriate: SATs results, attendance figures, exclusion issues, changes in home placements, reviews and interventions to raise achievement.

Intervention strategies will include study support, learning mentor support, home contracts, Pastoral Support Programmes, referrals to the looked after children's team counselling support etc. The report should also include information about non-academic progress in extra-curricular activities.

The Governing Body will monitor and evaluate the progress made by individuals and all the children using the same criteria used for other children in their peer group.

The Governing Body should ensure in discussion with the Headteacher that all school policies consider the needs of looked after children. These policies, for example exclusion/admission, should highlight how the school will support/respond to the needs of looked after children compared to their peers.

**This policy includes adopted guidance from the People Directorate: Children, Adults and Families**

**Policy reviewed 2016. Next review due 2019**