



preparing the way for others to follow

# Children Looked After Policy and Guidance

## Key document details

|                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Equality Impact Assessment required? | Yes / <del>No</del> |
| If yes, date of EIA                  |                     |
| Ratified:                            | Spring 2024         |
| Approver:                            | Trust Board         |
| Next review:                         | Autumn2 2024        |

Nationally, Children Looked After (CLA) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. We believe that Pioneer Educational Trust and our schools have a major part to play in ensuring that CLA are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education and the next steps in their lives. We aim to foster belonging and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful, enthusiastic learners and responsible individuals by providing a positive, safe and stimulating environment where all are included and achievements are celebrated.

For details of designated personnel see Appendix 1.

## **Definitions**

Looked After Children (CLA) are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents or respite care.

(The term '*In Care*' applies only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the *Children Act 1989*. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are said to be '*Accommodated*' by the LA under section 20 of the Act.)

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked-after children is properly discharged.

Looked-after children (CLA, also known as children looked after, CLA); may be looked after:

- By the LA where their school is situated;
- Or looked after by another LA but living in the same LA as their school is situated.

## **Aims**

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our CLA and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CLA as for all children.
- To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of CLA are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- To ensure that children looked-after have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and receive teaching that is fully inclusive;
- To provide a differentiated or scaffolded curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and abilities;
- To ensure that CLA are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision;

## Objectives

Pioneer Educational Trust's approach to supporting the educational achievement of children looked-after is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education;
- Promoting attendance;
- Targeting support;
- Having high expectations;
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes;
- Achieving stability and continuity;
- Early intervention and priority action;
- Listening to the young person;
- Promoting health and well-being;
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability;
- Working in partnerships with carers, social workers and other professionals.

## Legislation and Guidance

The [Children Act 1989](#) provides the legislative framework for child protection in England. Key principles established by the Act include:

- the paramount nature of the child's welfare
- the expectations and requirements around duties of care to children.

This is strengthened by the [Children Act 2004](#), which encourages partnerships between agencies and creates more accountability, by:

- placing a duty on local authorities to appoint children's services members who are ultimately accountable for the delivery of services
- placing a duty on local authorities and their partners to co-operate in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people.

Both of these acts are amended by the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#). Key provision in relation to CLA include:

- local authorities must appoint personal advisers for care leavers up to the age of 25 (Section 3).

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 amends the Children Act 1989 putting in place structures to enable children and young people to receive high quality care and support.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 the 2008 Act required all schools to appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of CLA on the school roll.

## The Role of each School's Designated Teacher

- To promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how looked-after children learn;

- Knowing who all the CLA are in school and ensuring that availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required;
- Attending relevant training about CLA and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CLA;
- To make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets;
- To be a source of advice for staff about differentiating teaching strategies appropriate for individual children;
- To make sure that CLA are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home;
- To have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the PEP within school;
- Liaising with the Virtual School in all aspects of the CLA progress, funding and support;
- Convening urgent multi-agency meetings if a CLA is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion;
- Arranging for a mentor or key worker, where required;
- Producing at least one annual report to the governing body which should include: current progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour. The report must not mention the children's names for confidentiality reasons;
- Promoting good home-school links and the importance of education as a way of improving life chances for CLA;
- Ensuring that, where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the Virtual School is informed at the earliest opportunity and additional support is provided to prevent exclusion, which would only be used as an absolute last resort.

Advice and guidance can be found in support in education for looked-after children and this can be found:

1. [Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)
2. [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)
3. [SEND: guide for social care professionals](#)

## The Role of the Schools and Governing Bodies

**All schools and governing bodies can promote better outcomes for children looked-after by:**

- Ensuring that the admissions criteria and practice prioritises looked-after children according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice 2021. These priorities also apply to academies and free schools;
- Ensuring all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LA;
- Ensuring a designated teacher for looked-after children has been identified and is empowered to champion these pupils, influence policy and practice across the school and ensure early intervention for any children looked after experiencing difficulties. Academies and free schools must also have a designated teacher;
- Ensuring that the school and ESB receive regular reports from the designated teacher and DDSL;
- Ensuring all looked-after children have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place, with all those involved in the life of the young person (e.g. parent, carer, social worker, designated teacher) playing an active role in their education. This also applies to pre-school CLA;

- The PEP is concerned with education in its broadest sense and should include appropriate in-school and extra-curricular targets for the young person;
- Schools should keep the LA department with responsibility for CLA fully advised about their progress and attendance.

### **Policy Monitoring and Evaluation by Governors**

The School/Trust is aware of the need to monitor and evaluate this policy regularly to ensure that the systems are in place to allow all of our pupils to achieve their full potential in a safe environment with appropriate and relevant support

To ensure competent, accountable and empowered practice, the focus of planned governor visits is to collect identified evidence, which may be carried out through:

- Interviews with pupils.
- Discussions with staff.
- Observations of classroom practice where this is deemed appropriate and useful.
- Reviews of documentary evidence which will show the following:
  - The identification of our strengths and weaknesses
  - The assurance that future actions are targeted to address any weaknesses
  - The recognition of our successes and the assurance that best practice is embedded
  - The cycle of school development planning
  - The allocation of resources in the most efficient and effective way to maximise their use
  - The assurance that there is consistency throughout the school/trust
  - The Identification of the needs of pupils, staff, parents and the wider community and the assurance that they are met
  - The assurance that policy and procedures meet the requirements of outside agencies

### **Implementation of the Policy**

1. Admissions criteria should not discriminate against CLA. For details of school admissions policies please see individual school websites.
2. The Trust will ensure that the schools allocate resources to support appropriate provision for CLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.
3. The Trust will ensure that schools assess each CLA's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.
4. The Trust will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of CLA (and all other pupils) at regular intervals. The Virtual School will require the Personal Education Plan (PEP) with the school and family and carers according to the needs of the child. The young person's views should be sought by the designated teacher and noted on the PEP. The CLA will attend the CLA review and PEP planning where possible.
5. The Trust will seek not to exclude looked after children.
6. The designated teacher has a list of all the CLA and will have access to their relevant contact details of placement. The designated teacher will also know about any CLA from other Authorities.
7. Staff will be encouraged to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support CLA. The designated teacher will develop staff awareness of issues associated with looked after children. Designated teachers will attend 'Children in Care' meetings and will keep lines of communication open, honest and regular.

8. As a Trust we seek to develop a strong partnership with parents, carers and care workers to enable CLA to achieve their potential. Review meetings will be used to further these links and engagement between school and carers will be regular and proactive.
9. We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting CLA.
10. The Trust will ensure that CLA have equal access in respect of:
  - Admission to school;
  - National Curriculum and examinations;
  - Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities;
  - Careers guidance and support.
11. This policy will be reviewed every year.

## **Policy Links**

This policy links with a number of other school policies/procedures and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of CLA when reviewing them. Please see individual school websites for the following policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Equality Policy

Trust Policies:

- [Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Statement](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy](#)

## Appendix 1

### Designated personnel

|                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Trustee with responsibility for CLA | Lucy Hegarty |
| Trust safeguarding lead             | Adam Spinks  |

### Foxborough Primary School

|                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Designated teacher for CLA           | Adam Spinks    |
| Governor with responsibility for CLA | Denby Richards |

### Trevelyan Middle School

|                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Designated teacher for CLA           | Bradley Day         |
| Governor with responsibility for CLA | Marjorie Clementson |

### Upton Court Grammar School

|                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Designated teacher for CLA           | Zelda Marais |
| Governor with responsibility for CLA | Vinay Dhir   |