

Aston Clinton School

Together we: Aspire, Care and Succeed



CLA (Children Looked After) Policy

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Date approved by governing Board | Autumn 2025 |
| Date to be reviewed | Autumn 2026 |
| Committee responsible for review | Full Governing Board |
| Review Cycle | Annual |

Statement of intent

The governing body of Aston Clinton School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Guidance on the Education of Looked After Children" (May 2000) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004. Children who are "looked after" may be "Accommodated"; "In Care" or "remanded/ detained".

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2023) 'School Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2. Definitions

“Children Looked-after (CLA); Looked-after children (LAC)” 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.

“Previously-LAC; Previously -CLA” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Accommodated (Section 20) - This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.

In Care - A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

Remanded/Detained - A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:

- an emergency protection order
- removed by police using their powers of protection
- remanded by a court following criminal charges
- a court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months

3. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children Looked After may (or may not) present with some of the following:

- low self esteem
- poor education standards due to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
- be bullied or bully others.
- be prone to mental health difficulties
- be isolated with few friends
- have behaviour difficulties
- poor attachments to others.
- have a need to be very private.

This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances. Support for CLA with SEND, who do not need an EHC (Educational Healthcare) plan, will be covered as part of the child's SEN plan and care plan reviews.

The SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator), class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH (Virtual School Hub) will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-CLA.

The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that CLA and previously-CLA with SEND are supported in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for CLA, e.g. where CLA are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Supporting the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- Ensure that there is a named DT (Designated teacher) and that the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- In partnership with the headteacher, ensure that, through their training and development, the DT has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand the respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of CLA.
- Governing bodies and the SLT should make sure that the DT role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting CLA to achieve.
- The governing body, in partnership with the head teacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working.
- Reviewing the **annual** report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of CLA in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an **annual** basis.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher, at Aston Clinton it is the school's SENDCo .
- Allowing the designated teacher, the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board **termly** on the following:
 - The number of CLA and previously-CLA in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of CLA and previously-CLA, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA is a key priority.
- Ensuring Enhanced Pupil Premium (PP+) for previously-CLA is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA. The

designated teacher for CLA is responsible for:

- Being an advocate for Children Looked After
- When new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;

- Ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parent's evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Encourage Children Looked After to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA

The designated teacher for previously-CLA is responsible for:

- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any difficulties of concern affecting the care leaver.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding previously-CLA as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-CLA.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of CLA and previously-CLA and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards CLA and previously-CLA.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding CLA and previously-CLA due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of CLA and previously-CLA.
- Monitor interventions supported by Enhanced Pupil Premium funding and ensure that the funding is evidence-based and in the best interests of the child.

5. Personal education plan (PEP)

All CLA must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

6. Working with agencies and the Virtual School Head (VSH)

The designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the CLA social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, [hold their annual review of CLA with their statutory care review.](#)

The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance difficulties, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard CLA and previously-CLA.

The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding CLA who are absent without authorisation.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CLA and previously-CLA.

7. Safeguarding

The school recognises that many CLA and previously-CLA have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst CLA and previously-CLA as soon as possible.

Where a CLA or previously-CLA has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

8. Pupil mental health

CLA and previously-CLA are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health difficulties which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health difficulties, understand the impact difficulties can have on CLA and previously-CLA, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst CLA and previously-CLA may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with CLA or previously-CLA are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

The school's senior mental health lead (Headteacher) and Emotional Support worker will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of CLA and previously-CLA.

9. Suspensions

Past experiences of CLA and previously-CLA will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy which is trauma informed.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance and as far as possible, avoid suspending and excluding any CLA.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a CLA to provide appropriate support for underlying difficulties that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

10. Policy Links

The school will champion the needs of Children Looked After, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

This policy links with a number of other school policies/procedures and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Children Looked After when reviewing them.

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying and Anti-Hate Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Equality Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Statement

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

For more information please see:

[Promoting the Education of Looked After Children](#)

[NSPCC Looked After Children](#)

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an **annual** basis by the designated teacher and the headteacher.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.