



# Children Looked After Policy

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Policy History	Date
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## **Children Looked After (CLA) Policy**

### **Definition**

Looked After is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting. St Cuthbert's Junior School recognises that Children who are Looked After may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

### **Rationale and Aim**

St Cuthbert's Junior School are committed to providing quality education for all its students based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Promoting the Education of Looked After Children" 2014, and "Designated Teacher for Looked After Children" 2009.

Nationally, Children who are Looked After (CLA) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 75% of Looked After children leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping CLA succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school. St Cuthbert's Junior School recognises that Children who are Looked After can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting and is committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that children in care may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances.

St Cuthbert's Junior School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of Looked After Children in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.

- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children. The designated teacher appointed at St Cuthbert's Junior School is Helen Mullinger.
- All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require

## **Policy**

Under the Children Act 1989 a child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she:

- is provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order
- is subject to a placement order

All Children Looked After will have full and equal access to all of the opportunities available at St Cuthbert's Junior School. There will be a designated member of staff for Children Looked After.

## **Procedure**

### **Admissions**

Children Looked After have been given the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The Governing Body will ensure that admissions criteria should not discriminate against CLA students. Due to care placement changes, CLA may enter the school midterm. It is vital that these students are given a positive welcome. If necessary they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new student settle.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. St Cuthbert's CLA policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure that the school makes appropriate provision for all CLA students.

### **The PEP (Personal Education Plan)**

Every CLA must have a PEP, and it must be used to support the personalised learning of the child. It is coordinated in school by the designated teacher. It is vital that the school assesses each CLA's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all students at regular intervals. CLA will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs. The young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

As part of the PEP process there should be robust arrangements in place to ensure that any

undiagnosed special educational needs are addressed through the SEND framework as soon as possible.

### **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.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher will know who all the CLA are and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any CLA from other authorities. It is important that the school flags CLA status appropriately in their information systems so that information is readily available as required.

### **Staff Development**

St Cuthbert's Junior school encourages 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. These could be courses which address the pupil's social, emotional and mental health or teaching and learning strategies.

### **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

St Cuthbert's Junior School firmly believes 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.

### **The Role of the Designated Teacher**

- be an advocate for CLA within the school
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for CLA on both the CLA and the rest of the school community
- attend relevant training about CLA
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CLA, seeking advice from the CLA team when appropriate.
- ensure that CLA receive a positive welcome on entering the school, especially midyear and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new student settle.
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a CLA 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 student
- 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 CLA
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a CLA transfers to another educational setting
- 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
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of CLA

### **Responsibility of the Headteacher**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Looked After Children and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Looked After Children to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

### **Responsibility of the governing body**

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children. The Education (Admission of CLA) (England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Looked After Children.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out: 1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any). 2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils. 3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils. 4. The number of fixed term and permanent

exclusions (if any). 5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school. 6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

**All school staff will:**

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

**Links to other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Pupil Premium Policy.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be monitored by the Designated Teachers in the school (Helen Mullinger).

**Implementation and Review**

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and governors, and published on the school website. Copies are also available upon request from the school office. This policy will be reviewed two yearly or as required.