

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) AND PREVIOUSLY CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (PCLA) POLICY

Term of Policy: Annual

Approved by: BoT

Date ratified: BoT 20.3.2024

Next Review Date: Spring 2025

Author: Sue Rockell

Sources: NGA The Key

Online location: Policies

Consulted with JCC? Yes No

Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations.

As part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, we have carefully considered the impact of this policy on equality. The School will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all employees and does not have a negative impact on students or staff with protected characteristics, race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Designated CLA & PCLA Teacher: Ms Sue Rockell

Governor: Pauline Hughes

For support and advice: Harrow CLA

Aims

Many CLA (Children Looked After) & PCLA (Previously Children Looked After) will have experienced disrupted schooling and gaps in learning. In addition, a significant proportion of CLA & PCLA have some form of Special Educational Need and or have been excluded from school. This has resulted in the attainment of this group not being in line with the attainment of their peers nationally.

At Rooks Heath School, we will address this by:

- providing a safe environment for all CLA & PCLA, where their educational experience is valued, high aspirations are encouraged and belief in the potential of all children is held.
- Ensuring that all CLA & PCLA are provided with, and have access to, support to enable them to have every opportunity to enjoy, learn and achieve in line with their peers.
- Ensuring that our policies and procedures for CLA & PCLA meet the requirements outlined within *'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children, Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, DfE February 2018.'*

Definitions

Children Looked After (CLA) or Children in Care (CiC) refers to a child 'looked-after by a local authority' as outlined by section 22 *Children Act 1989*.

CLA/CiC are children who are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours and include children who are

- living with foster parents
- living in a residential children's home or
- living in residential settings like schools or secure units

Previously Looked After Children (PCLA) refers to children who are;

'...no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any persons, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales,'

Responsibilities

The Governors

The Governors have appointed Mrs Pauline Hughes as the named Safeguarding Governor responsible for championing the needs of CLA & PCLA at every level throughout Rooks Heath School.

The named Governor will ensure that:

- The needs of CLA & PCLA are considered, reflected and supported within all relevant school policies.

- Governors and Senior Leadership are aware of the legal responsibilities and guidance in regards CLA & PCLA in education.
- Our admissions practices continue to give CLA & PCLA the highest priority admission to the school, as outlined within *'School Admissions' DfE guidance 2014*.
- The annual CLA & PCLA monitoring report is scrutinised to ensure that the academic progress of CLA & PCLA students is effectively being tracked and challenged.
- Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) spending is scrutinised ensuring that is used appropriately and effectively.
- Resources are available to address the needs specific CLA & PCLA, and that disparity in academic progress in comparison to their peers within school, including patterns in attendance and suspension and provision for most able students are highlighted and swiftly addressed.
- An appropriate member of staff is appointed as Designated Teacher, who has access to training and resources (including time) to undertake their responsibilities and has the seniority to influence Rooks Heath School Senior Leadership, to meet and champion the needs of throughout the school.
- All staff are supported in recognising and meeting the needs of CLA & PCLA.

The Head Teacher

Is responsible for ensuring that:

- The role of the Designated Teacher (DT) is filled by an appropriate member of staff at all times (including arrangements to allow for staff absences and resignation). The DT should have the seniority to work with Senior Leadership, Governors and all staff to provide information, advice and champion the achievement and needs of CLA & PCLA students.
- The DT is provided with the time to fulfil their role and completes the LA Statutory Designated Teacher Training every two years as well as any other training to assist with the fulfilment of their duties.
- Policies and procedures to monitor and address the needs of, and support for CLA & PCLA students are in place and adhered to, with reference to academic progress, admissions, attendance, safeguarding and suspensions, and that swift action is taken when concerns arise.
- Rooks Heath school reports on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children Looked After to Governors, the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Local Authority as required.
- Rooks Heath School works proactively with the Local Authority to provide support and address the needs of CLA & PCLA.
- All school staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities in regard to CLA & PCLA as detailed within this policy and related guidance.
- CLA Pupil Premium is used 'to the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- All staff are aware of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* guidance, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups and their propensity towards being both the victims and perpetrator of Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse.
- The Local Authority (Social Workers and the Virtual School) are informed of the suspensions from school of any CLA.
- An Anti-bullying Policy is in place and stringently followed which recognises that a significant proportion of CLA have experienced bullying at some point.
- The suspension of CLA & PCLA is avoided, alternatives to suspensions are considered and

additional support is put in place to support those pupils at risk of suspension.

- CLA & PCLA are encouraged and supported to continue engaging and achieving post 16.
- Information in regards to CLA & PCLA is treated confidentially, but also provided swiftly to relevant agencies and new schools.
- That CLA & PCLA students moving into Sixth Form automatically receive their vulnerable group Allowance/Bursary and that education is included within their pathway plan.
- The SENCO is aware of those CLA & PCLA children in school, works closely with the DT and prioritises their access to additional support both internally and externally (including EP assessment).

The Designated Teacher (DT) for CLA & PCLA

The Designated Teacher is responsible for and committed to championing the needs and attainment of CLA & PCLA students (up to the age of 18), in an effort to bridge the gap and raise their attainment so that it is in-line with their peers.

The DT is a qualified teacher and “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen...[who] should be an advocate for Children Looked After, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

The designated teacher is responsible for:

- Coordinating support for CLA & PCLA in school and providing information, advice and training for staff and governors to raise awareness of their needs. For example, raising awareness of possible Mental Health needs and the impact of poor attachment and trauma on behaviour and learning.
- Being the first point of contact for the Local Authority, CLA & PCLA, their carers and associated professionals, ensuring that a member of staff represents the school at all relevant meetings.
- Ensuring that all staff are trained on Trauma & Attachment.
- Liaising with the Virtual School, Social Workers, Carers and other relevant professionals when CLA & PCLA are experiencing difficulties and or at risk of suspension, arranging meetings to share concerns and plan interventions.
- Ensuring that all CLA & PCLA (and their carers) have an identified member of staff that they can approach in school.
- Monitoring the progress of CLA & PCLA throughout the school year culminating in an annual progress report to Governors.
- Coordinating and planning smooth CLA & PCLA educational transitions, including starting school, changing Key Stage etc keeping in mind their needs, in conjunction with the carers, parents, Virtual School and other professionals.
- Swiftly identifying possible learning needs, safeguarding and mental health concerns to the Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health Lead and SENCO where appropriate and jointly planning interventions to address these concerns.
- Encouraging CLA & PCLA students to take part in extracurricular activities and trips, and removing any hidden barriers to their involvement.
- Ensuring instances of bullying affecting CLA & PCLA students is acted upon swiftly and that appropriate support is put in place.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of CLA & PCLA, sharing personal information on a need to know basis only.

- Ensuring that CLA & PCLA have access to appropriate ongoing careers advice at the earliest opportunity and that they are encouraged to engage with post 16 education.
- Making sure that CLA & PCLA automatically receive their 'vulnerable group Bursary' and that it is allocated appropriately.
- PEP's (Personal Education Plans)
 - Ensuring that PEP's for CLA are accurate, effective, relevant and completed within the identified timescales with the child, social worker, carers and any other relevant professionals.
 - PEP's for CLA children with ECHP's complement rather than mirror the EHCP.
 - Advising relevant staff of PEP targets, making sure that staff work with students to meet their targets.
 - Ensuring that that the Pupil Premium for CLA is used appropriately to support the child in meeting targets outlined within the PEP.

All staff

- Have high expectations in regard to the achievement of CLA & PCLA students.
- Ensure that the individual needs of CLA & PCLA are met through quality, differentiated teaching.
- Are aware that CLA & PCLA have high rates of SEN and flag concerns regarding learning with the SENCO and DT.
- Are aware of the specific needs of CLA & PCLA in relation to Attachment and Trauma and make appropriate adjustment to teaching and classroom management to meet these needs.
- Are aware of the prevalence of CLA & PCLA mental health needs, and flag concerns to the DT and Mental Health lead.
- Work proactively with the DT to ensure that CLA & PCLA meet their targets and achieve, highlighting any barriers to learning, and inclusion at the earliest opportunity.
- Work to ensure the Inclusion of CLA & PCLA within the School community, maintaining their confidentiality while also providing support with raising their self-esteem, and supporting their relationships with peers in line with the Anti Bullying Policy.

PCLA

The experiences and outcomes of PCLA can be very similar to those of CLA. PCLA educational needs are unlikely to have changed just because their care status has. To address this, the needs of CLA and PCLA are prioritised and addressed in a similar way. The progress of PCLA students is reviewed termly and we work proactively with parents, carers and other professionals to address any areas of concern and put in place support as appropriate.

Parents and Carers of PCLA are encouraged to identify their child's previously looked after status on entry to the school and are required to produce documentation to support this. Any information will be treated confidentially.

CLA & PCLA students receive a similar level of support from the school. The attainment of PCLA students is monitored on a termly basis by the Designated Teacher and funding for additional support (over and above the support available for any other student) is funded by the annual PP.

Concerns regarding the progress of PCLA students are highlighted to parents, carers and the Virtual School (with parental consent) in a timely fashion so that support can be put in place swiftly. Parents/Guardians are directed to the Adoption Fund via LA Social Work assessment where necessary.

Admissions (See Admissions Policy for detail)

Rooks Heath School acknowledges and ensures that CLA & PCLA students are given priority for School Admissions as outlined in *DFE School Admissions Code Guidance 2014*. We work collaboratively with the Virtual School regarding any concerns that we might have in relation to the admission of CLA & PCLA students. The Designated Teacher attends CLA & PCLA admissions meetings and works closely alongside the Virtual School, Social Worker, Carers and any other professionals to ensure that students feel supported and have a successful smooth transition in to school life.

Inclusion

CLA & PCLA students are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life. Through effective communication with carers, professionals and staff, as well as the appropriate use of pupil premium and the PPG, we work to remove the barriers to CLA & PCLA students having a robust, enjoyable and valuable school experience.

The experiences of CLA & PCLA has resulted in disproportionate levels of Special Educational Needs within these groups. Nationally 70% of CLA have some form of SEN. In acknowledgement of this, individual attainment is monitored closely by the Designated Teacher via the PEP process and any concerns are identified and highlighted to the SENCO and Virtual School. Concerns raised by Carers, Social Workers and the Virtual School are welcomed and swiftly acted upon. Where it is felt that further assessment may be needed, CLA & PCLA access to the SEN assessment process and interventions are prioritised.

A significant proportion of CLA (and therefore PCLA) have undiagnosed Speech and Language needs which impacts on educational outcomes. In recognition of this, all CLA & PCLA (with the consent of parents & carers) are screened on entry for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. The outcome of CLA screening is communicated to the Virtual School and areas of concern are addressed swiftly with in-school support. Significant or continuing concerns are referred to specialist support from Speech and Language services.

Pupil Premium Grant & Pupil Premium Plus

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

A Pupil Premium Grant of £500 per term is provided by the Local Authority to assist the school with ensuring that students meet the targets outlined within their PEP. In line with Local Authority policy, pupil premium for each CLA is used to support:

- Academic achievement and progress.
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented.
- Attendance.
- Inclusion [by reducing internal and external suspensions].
- Social skills.
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider

In instances where further funding is needed for support, advice from the Virtual School will be sought.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

While the PP+ for PLAC is not a 'personal budget,' should a PLAC require support over and above that which is provided for any other pupil, the PP+ will be used to fund this.

PP+ for PLAC is also 'pooled' and used to provide additional support and services to raise the attainment of PLAC within school as outlined by our online Pupil Premium Strategy Statement and as part of a 3-year Pupil Premium Strategy, for instance:

- Attachment Training for all staff
- Purchasing LAC SALT screening tool to use with PLAC pupils who start school.
- One to one tuition
- Mentoring programmes

Attendance (*See Attendance Policy for detail*)

The attendance of CLA & PCLA is carefully monitored and reported daily to Welfare Call. Carers and Parents of CLA & PCLA will be contacted regarding unauthorised absences daily. Concerns regarding attendance including identified patterns of absence will be raised with parents, carers, social workers and professionals.

Suspensions/Exclusions

CLA and PCLA have disproportionally high levels of suspensions/exclusions from schools nationally, placing them at a further educational disadvantage.

In line with Local Authority and DfE Guidance, Rooks Heath do not take the decision to permanently exclude CLA & PCLA easily and will only make this decision once all other strategies have been exhausted. In addition, we work closely with the Local Authority to avoid the fixed term suspensions of both groups. [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance September 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Advice and support from the Local Authority (Social workers, the Virtual School or the Permanence Educational Support Officer) will be sought where it is felt that a CLA & PCLA may become at risk of suspension/permanent exclusion. Support and alternatives to suspensions/exclusions will be considered.

Alternatives to exclusion may include:

- SLT Supervisions
- Restorative Justice
- Managed Moves (through the Headteacher of the Virtual School)
- CAMHs support
- Additional therapeutic intervention via the Adoption Fund (PCLA only)

Where a fixed term suspension of a CLA is unavoidable, parents/carers and the Virtual School will be contacted prior to the student leaving the school site and work will be provided to avoid further gaps in education. Plans and support will be put in place to avoid further suspension on the child's return to school.

Other Relevant School Policies

Admissions

Anti-Bullying

Attendance

Behaviour Policy

Rooks Heath School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.