

# **Hazlemere Church of England Combined School**



## **Children Looked After Policy 2024-26**

***“Encourage one another and build one another up”***

***1 Thessalonians 5:11***

Headteacher

Signed on behalf of Governing body

Last reviewed May '24

Next reviewed May '26

## **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 children may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members, or they may be in an adoption placement, where the final Adoption Order has not yet been made by the Courts. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting. This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' and '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*'. The policy also includes requirements set out in '*The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children*' and '*Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children*'.

**Governor responsible:** Claire Krok-Paszowska (Safeguarding Governor)

**Designated Lead:** Brian Daniels (Head Teacher)

**Designated Teacher:** Tamara Brocklehurst (Inclusion Manager)

Hazlemere School recognises that all pupils are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorses the Buckinghamshire Council policy and welcomes Children Looked After (CLA) who may be looked after by the local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Buckinghamshire. Our approach to encouraging and supporting the education achievement of Children Looked After is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Lead is appointed, who will be responsible for all Children Looked After.
- All Children Looked After 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.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a broad and balanced education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and routine.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.

## **Rationale**

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, Children 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 Children Looked After 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.

We recognise that Children Looked After can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and are committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that Children Looked After 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.

We recognise that Children 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.

We believe that the education experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aim to provide a learning environment in which every child looked after can be successful.

We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that CLA are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

## **Responsibility of the Head Teacher**

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After, whose role is set out below. Tamara Brocklehurst is the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Children Looked After and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- 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 the Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children Looked After.
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies.
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children Looked After.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Children Looked After.
- 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 Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children Looked After are recognised and met.

## **The role of the Designated Teacher**

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs are identified and met.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Children Looked After in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- Ensure that each Child Looked After has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be a Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the Children Looked After that is necessary within school, liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for safeguarding as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage CLA may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage Children Looked After to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.

- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Children Looked After.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Be aware that 60% of Children Looked After say they are bullied, so actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Children Looked After.

### **The responsibility of all staff**

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

### **Confidentiality**

Information on Children Looked After will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know' basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

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

All CLA must have a care plan drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP); this forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document. There will be discussion about how the child, the school and the Local Authority can together ensure that through the content, implementation and review of the PEP, the child achieves well. These meetings will involve the young person concerned, the parents/carers, the social worker, a teacher and other professionals, as appropriate.

- Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a Child Looked After entering the school)
- Date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
- A date is set for the next pep meeting. The Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.
- PEP sent by Social Worker to the CLA team

### **Exclusions**

We recognise that Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a CLA is at risk of exclusion, the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Place. All relevant measure resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

### **Admission arrangements**

We recognise that due to care arrangements CLA may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognise that Children Looked After are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Children Looked After in the school's over subscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

### **Pupil Premium Grant for CLA**

Children Looked After and children adopted from care, on a special guardianship or child arrangements order are eligible for PP+ funding. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children and close the attainment gap between this group and their peers.

All pupil premium spending should take account of the specific needs of eligible pupils. Whilst there will be some overlap with needs of economically disadvantaged children who attract the pupil premium, looked-after and previously looked-after children's needs can be very different to others eligible for Pupil Premium.

The extra funding provided by the PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by looked-after and previously looked-after children. The designated teacher has an important role in ensuring the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by the school's staff and reflected in how the school uses PP+ to support these children.

For CLA, PP+ funding is managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) for the purpose of supporting their educational achievement. The VSH and schools, including the designated teacher work together to agree how this funding can most effectively be used to improve looked-after children's attainment. All PEPs include information about how that looked-after child is benefitting from the use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.

For previously looked-after children, PP+ funding is managed by the school. The amount the school receives is based on the number of eligible children recorded in the school's annual January School Census return to the Department for Education.