



Children Looked and Children Previously Looked After Policy

Date Published	September 2018
Next Review	September 2019
UCC Governor Approval Committee	Education
UCC Staff Role Responsible	Assistant Principal (PDBW)

Background

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care / children looked after and drew attention to:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. All schools should have a policy for Children Looked After that is subject to review and approval by the Governing Body. The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of children looked after by a local authority but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress.

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after children' or children in care or 'children looked after' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives, or
- Even with parents – under supervision of Children's Services

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children's home, or
- In a residential school

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under [section 52 of the Children Act 2004](#), the [Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Governors \(2009\)](#) and should be read in conjunction with it.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends 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. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH). In Rutland, Helen Bushell is the Virtual School Head 01572 722 577.

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible.

Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

Our Aims for CLA and Post CLA:

- to provide a safe and secure environment where education is always central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of CLA and Post CLA
- to narrow the gap between the attainment of CLA and Post-CLA and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress (*DCSF Guidance for Children in Care, '09*)
- that they benefit from school-based interventions, including 'Making Good Progress 121 Tuition', even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention (*DCSF Guidance for Children in Care, '09*) and to use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- for all CLA to have a minimum of three Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress (*DCSF Guidance for Children in Care, '09*)
- for all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with one key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school
- that school systems facilitate discrete support, as appropriate.
- CLA and their foster families will feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed into the community in recognition of the particular needs of this group (*DCSF Guidance for Children in Care, '09*)

The Objective of this policy:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of children looked after on the roll of the school.

The Name of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After (CLA) for the school:

Mr Paul Rhodes

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After Within UCC:

- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated;
- To ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan or ePEP with SMART targets that will promote progress;
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the Personal Education Planning meeting.
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced.
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'in care' and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children looked after and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;

- To ensure that members of staff who teach the children looked after on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the Personal Educational Planning meeting;
- To act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services and birth parents where appropriate;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer(s), that this information is kept up to date and used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- To track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked-after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- To inform the planning and where relevant, transition for children looked after post 16.
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan (PEP) are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant staff are aware of them.
- To report to the Governing Body at least on an annual basis on the outcomes for children looked after
- To have completed relevant CPD specifically for Designated Teachers and to attend other training as appropriate
- To ensure that school staff have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on learning;
- To support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after
- Work with Individual Children Looked After
- To discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- To ensure that the Pupil Voice section of the Hertfordshire Personal Education Plan or ePEP is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the student are faithfully represented in the PEP;
- To ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- To supervise the smooth induction of a new child looked after into the school.
- To develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of children looked after and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies

Liaison:

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on Child Protection Plans;
- To develop effective communication with Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan or ePEP is congruent with the child's Care Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;

- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school roll to the Virtual School as requested – progress and attainment data submitted each term.

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and Post-CLA by:

- reading the 'school policy' and 'school policy guidance document' for CLA
- attending training, as appropriate
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher
- referring to the Designated Teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating a 'CLA-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for CLA by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available

Attendance:

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of CLA and Post-CLA to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention, as outlined in the attendance policy.

Admissions/ Transitions:

School procedures to support CLA during admission and transition include:

- prioritising CLA and Post-CLA at the point of admission
- the swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support and planning for CLA and Post-CLA at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

Additional Educational Needs: The Graduated Approach:

All Staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and Post-CLA with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria (*in line with the DCSF Guidance for Children in Care, Nov '09*)
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight (*in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09*)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress each academic year, as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, PEP and CLA-Audit.

Special Educational Needs:

All Staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA who have special educational needs by:

- adhering to graduated approach as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice
- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year *(in line with the expectation set out in the PEP and CLA-Audit)*
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Designated Teacher and SENCO monitor delivery of interventions and review outcomes with class teacher
- where an EHCP is in place, PEPs and EHCP should be aligned to avoid duplication

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CLA by: familiarising themselves with the '*School Policy Guidance for Children in Care*' and following the school's child protection policy and the '*DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education*' (All staff) September 2016, if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Exclusion:

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a CLA, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the Rutland Virtual School Head. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of CLA and Post-CLA. (Ref: DfE Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England: Statutory Guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion. September 2017)

Training:

- To develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training events organised by Rutland County Council, Children's Services, or the Virtual School
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE or other research or policy.

The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After in the school:

Mrs Morag Topham

The role of that governor

The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked-after pupils in the school;
- A comparison of progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
- A comparison of attainment measures as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations after leaving school.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:

- Full time educational provision – at least 25 hours;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress, e.g. One-to-One tuition
- Employment Excellence careers guidance;
- Additional education support;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Work experience;
- The most effective use of the Pupil Premium to raise attainment

The named Governor is encouraged to support the Quality Assurance Process for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after if offered to ensure and confirm the schools' best practice.