



**THE MINSTER
NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL**
SCHOOL OF INSPIRATION
DETERMINATION HONOUR BELIEVE
PREPARING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE WITH INNOVATIVE AND EXCITING LEARNING

Children Looked After (CLA) Policy

Date: 11th October 2023

Signed.....Chair

To be reviewed on or before end October 2024

Let all that you do be done in love.
Corinthians 16:14

Our Vision: School of Inspiration

Our Mission: Preparing for a bright future with innovative and exciting learning.

Our Values: Determination, Honour and Believe

We recognise that, nationally, there is a considerable gap in the educational achievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers. We are committed to implementing the principles and practice outlined in “Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children- Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2010), Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 and The Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Aim

To provide a safe and secure environment that values education and promotes the abilities and potential of all children.

To bring educational achievement of our Children Looked After nearer to that of their peers.

To identify our school’s role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Children Looked After; asking the question ‘Would this be good enough for my child?’.

To ensure that carers and social workers of Children Looked After are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment.

To ensure that pupils are involved, where appropriate, in decisions affecting their future provision.

To ensure that Children Looked After take as full a part as possible in all school activities.

Context and Rational

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by the Local Authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours. They fall in to four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are subjects of emergency orders for their protection (Sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the Local Authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21)

The term ‘in care’ refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989. They may live with foster carers, in a children’s home, with relatives or parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘**accommodated**’ by the LA under section 20 of the Children Act. They may live in foster care, in a children’s home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be **Children Looked After** (CLA). They may be looked after by our Local Authority or may be in the care of another Local Authority but living in ours.

Children who are subject to a special guardianship or adopted and not 'Looked After'.

The Governing Body of The Minster Nursery and Infant School is committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place and are working effectively:

- A Senior Leader as Designated Teacher for CLA
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all CLA
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect CLA
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

Responsibility of the Head Teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for CLA, whose role is set out below. Cover arrangements will need to be in place should the Designated Teacher not be available to undertake these legal duties.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admissions progress, attendance, exclusions and attainment of CLA and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related policies.

Responsibility of the Governing Body

Name of nominated Governor: Diane Edwards

The Governing Body will:

- Identify a Nominated Governor for CLA who links with the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs of all its CLA regardless of the originating Local Authority
- With the Head Teacher, ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities in relation to CLA
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of CLA
- Review annually the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

Name of the Designated Teacher: Mrs Sharon Morgan, SENDCO

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for CLA
- Ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer. Note will be made of any specific requirements, including care status.

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- Ensure that a Personal education Plan (PEP) is completed as soon as possible (at least within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support worker/agencies and be linked in to the Care Plan meeting, which take place within 28 days of becoming Looked After, 3 months after the first review and then every 6 months. A flow chart showing PEP completion is found at the end of this policy.
- Arrange for the child to be supported to complete their section of the PEP, which gives an opportunity for the child to have their views taken in to account and valued.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings.
- Ensure that each child (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (based on the child's request-may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher)
- Maintain a register/database of all CLA in the school to include:
 - The name of the social worker, home borough, area office and contact details
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated
 - Type of placement i.e. residential, foster, respite
 - Daily contact information e.g. name of carer/ parent/ key worker in residential home.
- Ensure that the status of CLA is identified within the school's information management system to track academic and other progress and target support appropriately
- Prepare reports for governors' meetings to include:
 - The number of CLA on role and confirmation that they have a PEP
 - Their attendance compared to other pupils
 - Their attainment compared to other pupils
 - The number, if any, of Fixed Term exclusions or Permanent Exclusions
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors, raising awareness of the achievements as well as the needs of CLA.
- Ensure confidentiality for 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, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive
- Encourage CLA to participate in extra-curricular activities and out-of-hours learning where possible
- 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
- Work in partnership with Croydon Virtual School or the virtual school of the borough from which they are placed to provide progress data as requested.

Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff

- Ensure that any child is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- Respond positively to a CLA's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it necessary

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- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs as appropriate
- As with all children, ensure no child is stigmatised in any way
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child to achieve stability within school
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA
- Positively promote the self-esteem of CLA

Admission to School

Children Looked After are the highest priority on our admission criteria and we expect them to have a planned admission to our school. We will seek to admit these children after meeting the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals to identify needs, support mechanisms and allow the child to prepare to enter school.

Allocation of Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CLA meeting the objectives in this policy.

We will work with Croydon Virtual School and Virtual Schools from other Local Authorities to ensure that CLA receive the full support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Confidentiality

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

Training

Croydon Virtual School provide regular training opportunities for the Designated Teacher to attend, often related to EPEP system and the role of the Designated Teacher. Attendance is encouraged.

The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

The Governing Body will ensure staff receive appropriate training to fully undertake their roles with relation to CLA allocating resources and time.

Further Information

Support for CLA by Croydon is provided by the Croydon Virtual School.

Croydon Virtual School Head Teacher: Sarah Bailey Sarah.Bailey@croydon.gov.uk

The Virtual School (VS) contact email address is VirtualSchool@croydon.gov.uk

The Virtual School (VS) contact number is 0208 726 6000 ext 88817

www.croydon.gov.uk/schools-and-education/schools/virtual-school

Further guidance can be found in:

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children-Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (February 2018)

The Designated Teacher for Looked after and Previously Looked After Children-Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (February 2018)

Personal Education Plan (PEP) Completion

Social worker informs school of a child becoming Looked After (or a CLA entering the school) within 48 hours of starting at school.

Social Worker initiates the Personal Education Plan (PEP) Meeting. A copy of the form is sent to the school (ideally electronically) to enable completion of educational data prior to the meeting (if the child is already known to the school)

PEP meeting takes place within 20 school days of the child becoming Looked After or starting at the school. This should involve the social worker, Designated Teacher (or other appropriate staff) carer and young person. A date is set for the next PEP meeting in 6 months' time.

Personal education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life.

This is the process for CLA by Croydon. Other Local Authorities may have slightly different procedures on PEP completion as well as different PEP format.

Croydon Virtual School EPEPs are completed online at epeponline.co.uk

Advice and support can be found via the helpdesk on 0333 772 0944

Different Local Authorities will advise you on how their PEPs are completed when pupils are transferred to The Minster Nursery and Infant School.