

CHILD IN CARE / DESIGNATED TEACHER POLICY

Date of last review	19 November 2024
Review cycle	Annual
Policy due for review and approval by Local Governing Body	November 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

The Saffron Valley Collegiate seeks to provide a personalised educational experience that identifies and responds to the circumstances and needs of each individual child or young person. In doing so it enables them to progress academically and become successful learners through the re-engagement of the young person with education.

EQUALITIES STATEMENT:

All who work at the Saffron Valley Collegiate are committed to the celebration of diversity, and the challenging of disadvantage and discrimination, in all of its forms.

These values are explicit to the ethos of the PRU and implicit in all policies and practices.

Introduction

The Local Governing Board (LGB) of Saffron Valley Collegiate is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This Governing Body recognises that, nationally, there is a considerable gap in the educational achievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in *"Promoting the education of Looked-after and Previously looked-after children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities"* (February 2018) and *"The Designated Teacher for Looked-after and Previously Looked-after children – Statutory Guidance on their roles and responsibilities"* (February 2018).

Aim

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

To bring the educational achievements of our Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After (PLA) nearer to those of their peers.

To identify our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our CLA and PLA. Asking the question 'would this be good enough for my child?'

To ensure that carers and social workers of CLA and PLA are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment

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

To ensure that CLA and PLA take as full a part as possible in all school activities.

Context and Rationale

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

Previously looked-after children are those who:

- are no longer looked after by a Local Authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014). An 'eligible' child is a child who is looked-after, aged 16 or 17 and has been looked after by a local authority for a period of 13 weeks or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after they reached 14 and ended after they reached 16 because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order
- were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

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, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the Local Authority 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 authority but living in ours.

Children who are subject to special guardianship or adopted are not looked after.

The LGB of Saffron Valley Collegiate 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 or a member of staff with enough seniority to affect change as Designated Teacher for CLA and PLA.
- Personal Education Plans for all CLA and PLA.
- All staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect CLA and PLA.
- Effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- Identify a designated teacher for CLA and PLA, 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 PLA 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.

Responsibilities of the Local Governing Body

- Identify a Nominated LGB Governor for CLA and PLA who links with the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that all LGB Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CLA and PLA.
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs of all its CLA and PLA regardless of the originating authority.
- With the Headteacher, ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out their responsibilities in relation to CLA and PLA.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of CLA and PLA.
- Review annually the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA and PLA.

Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children and supports other staff members to do this too.
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. It also takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for CLA and PLA.
- ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer. Note will be made of any specific requirements, including care status.
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible (at least within 20 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 workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, which take place within 28 days of becoming looked after, 3 months after the first review and then at least, every 6 months. (A flow chart showing the PEP completion is found at the end of this policy.)
- 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 (this should be based on the child's request and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher).
- Maintain a register / database of all CLA and PLA in the School, to include
 - the name of the social worker, 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 and PLA is identified within the school's management information system to track academic and other progress and target support appropriately.
- prepare reports for LGB meetings to include:
 - the number of CLA and PLA on role and confirmation that they have a PEP
 - their attendance compared to other pupils
 - their attainment (SATs and teacher assessments compared to other pupils)
 - the number, if any, of fixed-term suspensions and 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 the LGB, raising awareness of the achievements as well as the needs of CLA and PLA.
- ensure confidentiality for individual 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 and PLA to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible.
- 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 suspended.
- work in partnership with Croydon Virtual School and other Local Authority Virtual Schools to provide progress data as requested.

CLA and SEND

- ensure that the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice 0 to 25 years, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed; and that PEPs work in harmony with any EHC plans.
- ensure that, with the help of the Virtual Schools they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable.

CLA and Mental Health

The Designated Teachers will work with the school mental health first aiders, CAMHS and the Virtual Schools to ensure that they, and other school staff, have the skills to:

- identify signs of 'potential' mental health issues and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team, where applicable.
- understand the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on looked-after and previously looked-after children and their ability to engage in learning.
- ensure all school staff understand attachment theory and the impact of attachment disorders on a child's emotional development and learning and respond appropriately to their needs.
- undertake regular assessment of the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by looked-after and previously looked-after children using Edukit and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

- ensure that the results from these assessments are used to inform the PEP.

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 child looked after's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- as with all children, ensure that no child is stigmatised in any way.
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child to achieve stability within the school setting.
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA and PLA.
- positively promote the self-esteem of CLA and PLA.

Admission to School

Children Looked After and Previously Looked After are very high 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 the school.

Allocation of Resources

The LGB will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CLA and PLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

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

Confidentiality

Information on CLA and PLA 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 meetings 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

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

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

Further Information

Designated Teacher with oversight of CLA and PLA: Sally White

Designated Teachers within each provision:

SVC KS4 North – Folake Aboyade and Sarah Butler

SVC KS4 South – Paul Harvey

SVC KS3 – Kay Wilson and Andy Halka

Springboard – Nicky Leptos and Sonia Kapoor

Cotelands – Kate Maidment-Young

Support for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children by Croydon is provided by the Croydon's Virtual School. They may also be able to give advice about children looked after by other boroughs in the school.

Croydon Virtual School
Sarah Bailey, Head of Service
7th Floor, Leon House, 233 High Street,
Croydon.
CRO 9XT

Phone: 020 8604 7694

Email: Sarah.Bailey@croydon.gov.uk

Further guidance can be found in:

- The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children – Statutory Guidance on their roles and responsibilities (Feb 2018)
- Promoting the education of looked after and previously look after children - Statutory Guidance for local authorities (February 2018)
- Statutory Guidance for school governing bodies (2009)

Please also refer to the following Saffron Valley Collegiate policies:

- Equalities Policy
- SEND Policy

Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion

Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after child or previously looked after child entering the school) within 48 hours of starting at school.

Social Worker initiates the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting. A copy of the PEP form should be available on the e-pep system to enable completion of educational data prior to the meeting.

PEP meeting takes place within 20 days of child becoming looked after or entering 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.

Note: This process is for Children who are looked after or previously looked after by Croydon- other authorities may have slightly different procedures on PEP completion as well as a different PEP format.