



Designated Teacher Policy (Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After)

Approved by: Full Governing Board

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1. Aims

Oaks Park High School is committed to providing high-quality education and support for Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Children Looked After (PCLA). The aims of this policy include:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed, appropriately trained and experienced to support the educational achievement of CLA and PCLA;
- 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;
- Establishing a robust monitoring and review process for the progress and achievements of CLA and PCLA.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy adheres to the statutory guidance outlined by the Department for Education on the role of the Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA. [statutory guidance on the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

This policy also incorporates:

- The Children Act 1989: This Act established the primary legal framework for child protection and welfare in England. It outlines the responsibilities of local authorities in providing care and support for children in need;
- The Children Act 2004: This Act was introduced to enhance inter-agency collaboration and address shortcomings in the child protection system. It builds upon the principles of the Children Act 1989 by promoting coordinated support across different services;
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008: This Act strengthens the legal framework for supporting CLA by emphasizing educational stability and improved care planning;
- The Academies Act 2010: For academies and free schools, this Act ensures compliance with funding agreements and statutory provisions.

3. Definitions

- Children Looked After (CLA): Pupils who are in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority for more than 24 hours;

- Previously Children Looked After (PCLA): Pupils who were previously looked after by a local authority but have since been adopted or placed under a special guardianship or child arrangements order;
- Personal Education Plan (PEP): A statutory document that forms part of a CLA's care plan, outlining strategies and targets to support their educational progress;
- Virtual School Head (VSH): A local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority children looked after, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents, carers and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

4. Identity of the Designated Teacher

Our Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA is Ms S Fraser.

Contact details:

Email: sfraser@oakspark.redbridge.sch.uk

Ms Fraser takes lead responsibility for the educational achievement and well-being of CLA and PCLA, acting as a key liaison between the school, carers, social workers, and external agencies.

Our CLA Key worker is Ms N Mitchell

Contact details:

Email: nmitchell@oakspark.redbridge.sch.uk

Ms N Mitchell, the CLA Key Worker at Oaks Park High School and undertakes the day to day monitoring of CLA students.

5. Role of the Designated Teacher and Key worker

5.1 Leadership Responsibilities

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
 - Working with VSHs,
 - Promoting a whole-school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised,
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve,
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils,
- Contribute to the development and review of whole-school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities;
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children;

- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their parents, carers and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations;
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs;
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to;
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure that CLA and PCLA receive the necessary academic, emotional, and pastoral support;
- Lead staff training and awareness sessions to ensure all school personnel understand their responsibilities toward CLA and PCLA;
- Foster a culture of high aspirations and educational ambition for CLA and PCLA by:
 - Working with VSHs,
 - Promoting a whole-school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised,
- Monitoring attendance, behaviour, and academic progress, and addressing any emerging issues promptly;
- Facilitating interventions, mentoring, and enrichment opportunities to enhance learning outcomes for CLA students;
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs;
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to;
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education .

The Key Worker will:

- Act as a daily point of contact and advocate for CLA students;
- Assist with the development and implementation of Personal Education Plans (PEPs);
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher, social workers, and Virtual School Heads to ensure that CLA receive the necessary support;
- Provide emotional and academic guidance, ensuring stability and consistency in school life.

5.2 Supporting Children Looked After

The Designated Teacher will:

- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs;
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs;
- Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs;
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP;
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place;

- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authorities decide what arrangements work best for pupils;
- Ensure that a looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered;
- PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced;
- The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan;
- Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version;
- Ensure each looked-after child has a robust and regularly reviewed PEP that reflects their needs and progress;
- Work closely with teachers, SEND coordinators, and external agencies to support individual learning needs;
- Monitor academic progress and intervene when necessary to ensure pupils achieve their full potential;
- Advocate for looked-after children during school transitions and liaise with new schools to ensure a smooth transition.

5.3 Supporting Both CLA and PCLA

The Designated Teacher will:

- Monitor the appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding to support the educational progress of CLA and PCLA;
- Offer guidance to staff on best practices for supporting CLA and PCLA in the classroom;
- Ensure the emotional and mental well-being of CLA and PCLA is prioritised within school policies and support services;
- Work collaboratively with carers, social workers, and external agencies to ensure a holistic approach to education;
- Ensure the specific needs of PCLA and a CLA are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding;
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of a PCLA and a CLA and how to support them;
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for CLA can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes;
- Help raise the awareness of parents, carers, and guardians of PCLA about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging them to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding;
- Play key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support PCLA;
- Encourage parents', carers', and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use;
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of PCLA and a CLA in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour, and future career planning;
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of PCLA and a CLA and make sure other staff also have awareness and understanding of this;
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to CLA, is followed;
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health, and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have;

- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in relations to a PCLA/CLA, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary;
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in a PCLA and a CLA and how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services;
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for CLA, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs;
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of PCLA.

5.4 Relationships Beyond the School

The Designated Teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of PCLA and a CLA;
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, ensuring clarity on parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom;
- Be open and accessible to parents, carers, and guardians of previously looked-after children, encouraging their active involvement in their children's education;
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as Virtual School Heads (VSHs) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) departments;
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise educational stability for CLA by:
 - Ensuring the latest information on educational progress contributes to statutory care plan reviews,
 - Informing VSHs when CLA are absent without authorisation and working with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action,
 - Consulting with social workers and relevant local authority staff about care placement changes that may disrupt education, providing advice on minimising disruption,
 - Ensuring smooth transitions when a CLA moves schools by sharing all necessary information with the new Designated Teacher;
- Seek advice from VSHs on meeting the needs of individual PCLA, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians;
- Ensure that for each CLA:
 - There is an agreed process for collaboration with carers and professionals, including social workers, to review and support educational progress,
 - School policies are communicated to carers, social workers, and, where appropriate, birth parents,
 - Teachers know the most appropriate contact for different matters, such as permissions for school activities;
- Where a CLA is at risk of exclusion:
 - Contact the VSH as soon as possible to explore support strategies and prevent exclusion where feasible,
 - Work with the VSH and carers to assess and implement additional support addressing the child's needs;
- Where a PCLA is at risk of exclusion:
 - Discuss concerns with the child's parents, carers, or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on preventing exclusion.

6. Monitoring Arrangement

The effectiveness of this policy and the role of the Designated Teacher will be reviewed annually by V Bradley (SENDco) & E DeGrove (DSL).

The full governing board will approve any changes or amendments to ensure continued compliance with statutory requirements.

7. Links with Other Policies

This policy aligns with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- SEN Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy

For further information, contact Ms. S Fraser at sfraser@oakspark.redbridge.sch.uk