Children Looked After (CLA) Policy

Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Children Looked After (CLA) and previously Children Looked After (PCLA) are of real concern. Students who are looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation.

Manor Green School endeavors to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our students. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage students to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for CLA and previously-CLA realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help students develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2026) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behavioural Support Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy (Students)
- Safeguarding Policy

Definitions

"Children Looked After (CLA)" are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA (under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989) in agreement with their parents.

"Previously-CLA" are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Roles and responsibilities

The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's CLA, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to CLA and previously-CLA.
- Working with the school to ensure all CLA in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for CLA.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents/carers of previously-CLA as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the CLA who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a student on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a student's PEP.

- Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CLA.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- Ensure the education achievement of CLA is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of CLA through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties and has received appropriate training
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child
- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep CLA and previously-CLA safe.
- Ensuring CLA and previously-CLA have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of CLA in the school.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
- The number of CLA and previously-CLA in the school
- An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other student groups
- The attendance of CLA and previously-CLA, compared to other student groups
- The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other student groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA is a key priority.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA.

The designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to CLA and previously-CLA.
- Promoting the educational achievement of CLA and previously-CLA at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring CLA are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for CLA.
- Ensuring that CLA are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all CLA and previously-CLA.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of CLA's respective social worker and VSH.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

The Deputy Principal or Deputy Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CLA and previously-CLA.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents/carers when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-CLA.

Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of CLA and previously-CLA and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards CLA and previously-CLA.
- Promoting the self-esteem of CLA and previously-CLA.
- Being inclusive with all on-site and off-site activities.

PEP

All CLA must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

- The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a student to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and parents/carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- The PEP will address the student's full range of education and development needs, including:
    - Access to the appropriate provision
    - On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
    - Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
    - Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
    - School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
    - Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
    - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
    - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
    - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

Working with agencies and the VSH

- The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the CLA social workers, in addition to parents/carers or residential social workers.
- The school will coordinate their review meetings.
- The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard CLA and previously-CLA.
- Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- The designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
- The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how student premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- PP+ for previously-CLA will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school.
- The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of CLA, or previously-CLA, and according to their needs.
- If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.
- The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding CLA who are absent without authorisation.
- The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CLA and previously-CLA.

Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of CLA and previously-CLA have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Options on accreditation
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting students to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

All training will be provided so that staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep CLA and PCLA safe.

Student Mental Health

- CLA and previously-CLA are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

- The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CLA and previously-CLA, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- Boxall assessment will be used twice a year to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about CLA and previously-CLA's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.
- The school's mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of CLA and previously-CLA, and will always either be a member of, or supported by the senior leadership team or DSL.

Suspensions and exclusions

- Past experiences of CLA and previously-CLA will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Support Policy.

- The school will have regard to the DfE's 2026 statutory guidance 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' and recognises that suspending or excluding CLA can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides. The headteacher will balance this recognition alongside the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all staff and students, devising strategies that take both into consideration.

- Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the student's education in the event of exclusion.

- The school will inform parents/carers that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

- Where a CLA is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible. The VSH will work with the designated teacher and other relevant individuals to consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the student's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

Information sharing

- Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CLA and previously-CLA are understood and met.
- The arrangements set out include:
    - Who has access to information on CLA and previously CLA and how data will remain secure.
    - How students and parents/carers are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
    - How parents/carers contribute to and receive information.
    - Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
    - How relevant information about individual students is passed between authorities, departments and the school when students move.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Local Governing Board approved this policy on date: 22nd October 26

Signed: Colin Hayfield, Chair of Governors

Signed: Helen Hannam, Headteacher & Principal

Date of review or revision	Description	Author or reviewing officer
January 2025	Dates updated and unneeded lines removed.	Warren Griffiths
October 2026	Dates updated and job title changes	Warren Griffiths