The Designated Teacher For Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Weaverham High School

Approved by:	Governing Body	**Date:** 7th October 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
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This policy has been written in accordance with guidance from the "Policy for Children Looked After" by Children's Services (CSF 4093) and the "Guidance for Schools on the Education of Children Looked After" publication (CS0441) and 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children' Statutory guidance for local authorities.

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

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' (LAC) or children in care (CIC)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 Virtual School for Cheshire West and Chester guidance should be read in conjunction with it. Schools and the Designated Teacher for Looked After children now have a statutory duty (from Sept 2018) to take particular account of the circumstances of a **previously-LAC.** The relevant revised statutory guidance is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children

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 Cheshire, Adam Croft is the Virtual School Head and is also the link person for Weaverham High School.

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.

Policy Objective

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (Post CLA) on roll at Weaverham High School.

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and Post CLA: Richard Harris

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and Post CLA: Mrs Jo Parry

At Weaverham High School we will create an environment where children looked after (CLA) and children previously looked after (Post-CLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the DfE Guidance Document for Designated Teachers - February 2018.

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for CLA and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise.

Our school community aims to champion the needs of CLA to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care.

Our Aims for 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

● to ensure they have access to enrichment and cultural capital experiences that promote wellbeing and personal development.

● pupils benefit from school-based interventions, including additional Maths and English intervention, additional home tuition, Academic Coaching 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

● for all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with support from Pastoral Support Managers and where necessary Achievement Coordinators who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school

● 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

Educational Planning for Children Looked After

Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CLA and Post-CLA. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After has qualified teacher status and time to fulfil this statutory role. They will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and Post-CLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school and staff receive appropriate training.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is Richard Harris. He is a qualified teacher and Deputy Headteacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and Post-CLA by:

- act as the central point of contact within their school for all links with Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children
- ensure the young person's voice is represented during decision making about them
- help and encourage staff to understand the needs of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children
- help carers to promote a positive learning environment at home
- take the lead in implementing Personal Education Plans (PEPs) within their setting

The Designated teacher has a statutory responsibility in developing the Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each CLA.

- All Children in Care must have a PEP as part of their overall care plan.

- When a Child in Care enters your school the social worker should make arrangements for an initial PEP meeting to take place within 20 working days (10 days for an emergency case).

- Within Cheshire West and Chester it is the designated teacher's responsibility to ensure that, where possible, the PEP form is completed and sent back to the social worker at least three days before the meeting.

- During the meeting, the form is amended jointly by the DT and social worker taking into account the child's voice. After the meeting the DT should work with other members of staff to ensure progress is being made by the young person in line with the targets discussed.

- Each time a new PEP meeting is held the PEP must include any new information, assess progress against the targets since the last PEP, and review the other information including effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding. During a period of transition (e.g. Year 6 to Year 7) the designated teacher has a key role in helping to make this as smooth as possible for the young person, including making sure there are effective arrangements in place for the passing over of key information.

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:

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
- 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
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress each academic year

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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

- adhering to graduated approach as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice
- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year (in line with the expectation set out in the PEP)
- 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 SEND Code of Practice
- Designated Teacher and SENDCO 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 and post CLA by: familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' document 2026 and Working together to safeguard children, if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Alternative Provision

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision, alternative to daily attendance at school, will be:

- a plan that will retain the CLA on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for reporting and accountable for the PP+

- an agreed part of the overall PEP for the pupil
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the CLA or Post-CLA
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that PEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

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 assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. 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)

Multi-Agency Working

School staff will engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This should include: Virtual Schools, Social Care, health, carers. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA and Post-CLA.