



Woolwich Polytechnic
School for Girls



WOOLWICH POLYTECHNIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Children Looked After (*CLA) Policy

*Formerly LAC

Reviewed September 2023
Approved: December 2023
Revision due: December 2024

Rationale:

Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of students in public care.

Designated Teacher for CLA - Emma Smith

Academy Committee member with responsibility for CLA - Anca Czifra

Policy in Practice:

This policy statement outlines the commitment of the staff and Academy Committee Members of Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CLA as for all children
- ensure that all CLA and previously CLA have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that CLA and previously CLA students take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of CLA students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that CLA students are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Who are Looked After Children?

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 by the authority.

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).

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;

- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person³, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

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.

Admissions

The Academy Committee Members will ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises CLA according to the DfE's Admissions Code of Practice.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our CLA policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Academy Committee Members will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all CLA students.

Allocation of resources

The Academy Committee Members will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The DSL will track the provisions provided for CLA, and ensure they are personalised and reviewed to ensure they are having impact.

Monitoring the progress of CLA

The social worker for the CLA should initiate a Personal Education Plan within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. The school will play an active part in supporting the process and it is vital that it assesses each CLA's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all students at termly intervals. CLA will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the CLA in the school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any CLA from other authorities. It is important that the school "flags" CLA status appropriately in its information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development

The Designated Teacher will be provided with appropriate training to carry out his/her role. This will involve being part of the Local Authorities training. The DSL will also ensure that staff are kept up to date on training for attachment, trauma, mental health and SEND.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls, we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable CLA to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting CLA. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual CLA:

- CLA teams
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- medical officers
- school nurses
- CAMHS

- Attendance Advisory Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

Children Looked After are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements
- lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by CLA have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for CLA within the school
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for CLA on both the CLA and the rest of the school community
- know who are all the CLA in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- attend relevant training about CLA
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CLA, seeking advice from the CLA team when appropriate.
- ensure that CLA receive a positive welcome on entering the school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- ensure that all CLA have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at termly intervals

- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a CLA is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- act as the key adviser for staff and Academy Committee Members on issues relevant to CLA
- ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for CLA
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a CLA transfers to another educational placement
- contribute information to CLA reviews when required
- report to The Academy Committee Members on CLA in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- prepare reports for Academy Committee Members' meetings to include:
 1. the number of CLA on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan - PEP.
 2. their attendance compared to other students.
 3. their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other students.
 4. the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 5. the destinations of students who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate - such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of CLA.
- arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk,
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. CLA are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

All school staff will:

- follow school procedures
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a CLA's progress
- have as high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of CLA s for other students
- positively promote the raising of a CLA's self-esteem.
- ensure any CLA is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on CLA and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a CLA is experiencing difficulties
- give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

The Academy Committee Members will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises CLA according to the DfE's Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all Academy Committee Members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for CLA
- liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of CLA are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for CLA who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give CLA equal access in respect of:
 1. admission to the school
 2. National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 3. out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
 4. Counselling and mentoring services
 5. work experience and careers guidance.

Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls will:

- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA.
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to any meetings for CLA.