



PHILIPS HIGH SCHOOL

Education of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Date	7.10.23
Date to be reviewed	October 2024
Person responsible	J Dalziel

Is this good enough for my child?

Children and young people in care have a right to expect the outcomes we want for every child. As a school we play a vital role in supporting the local authority to achieve the highest possible educational standards and outcomes for all children in care (Children and Young People in Care, CLA and PLAC pupils (Children Looked After - CLA and Previously Looked After Children - PLAC) on our school roll.

Our school understands and supports the premise that as **Corporate Parents** we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of children and young people in care. We take that duty seriously and our school ensures that there is a common understanding amongst all staff (including non-teaching staff) of the needs of children and young people in care.

This policy complies with the following statutory guidance issued to all local authorities:

- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act").
- Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act").
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act.
- The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked After Pupils Guidance 2018.
- Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked-after children DfE 2018
- The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies DCSF 2009
- Improving the attainment of looked after young people in secondary schools: Guidance for Schools DCSF 2009
- KCSIE 2023

The statutory guidance issued by the Department of Education comes under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. This means that it **must** be followed unless there are exceptional circumstances that justify departing from it.

1. The role of Philips High School's Governing Body

The Governing Body has a legal duty to appoint the school's Designated Teacher (DT) ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and that the post holder has Qualified Teacher Status.

Our Designated Teacher is a member of our Senior Leadership team and is able to carry out the statutory duties effectively (J Dalziel Assistant Headteacher).

The local authority is kept updated with the name and designation of our Designated Teacher and is promptly informed of any changes (statutory expectation).

The school has a named Governor with responsibility for Children and Young People in Care and the Local Authority's CLA and PLAC pupils Education team is kept informed of any change to that nomination. The Nominated Governor undertakes to attend CLA and PLAC pupils Governor Training as required(Mr D Evans)

The Governing Body is kept fully informed of the number of CLA and PLAC pupils on the school roll (and their placing authority if the child/young person is not in care to Bury).

The Nominated Governor meets regularly with the Designated Teacher for calendared updates.

The Designated Teacher, supported by the Head Teacher, provides termly/annual reports on the progress of CLA and PLAC pupils in school and any other issues pertaining to their status. This is in line with statutory requirements.

The Governing Body and school leadership team consider the extent to which school policies take account of the particular needs of looked after children (2.12 : Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies 2009)

The Governing Body ensures that the needs of Children and Young People in Care are recognised in all school policies. This will ensure that all of Philips High School's whole school policies will be reviewed in terms of impact on looked after children, ensuring they don't unintentionally put looked after children, on our roll at a disadvantage.

The Governing Body has ensured that our school has a clear policy in relation to admissions, exclusions and access to school based services and opportunities for all children /young people in care on our roll.

The Governing Body ensures that the Designated Teacher's workload is monitored and that he/she has sufficient capacity so that their statutory duties can be carried out effectively.

Philips High School understands the importance of specific professional development for, as a minimum, their senior leaders and Designated Teachers in supporting the achievement of looked after children.

The Governing Body ensures that the Designated Teacher is able to attend training as required and as appropriate, but, as a minimum, annual training will be undertaken, in line with legislation. The Designated Teacher is supported to ensure that learning from the training is effectively disseminated to all staff ensuring that all staff understand and support the ethos of **Corporate Parenting** and the school's role in promoting and underpinning the looked after child's education journey.

2. The role of the Head Teacher and the Leadership team

"Doing the things they do for all young people but more so"

Philips High School's Designated Teacher meets the statutory criteria for appointment and has been duly appointed by the Governing body. The CLA and PLAC pupils Education Team (Virtual School) is kept informed of any changes. The annual request for updated information is complied with in order to support the local authority in fulfilling its legal obligations.

The Head Teacher expects every adult to prioritise the personal, emotional and academic needs of vulnerable children and young people.

The Head Teacher of Philips High School, in partnership with the senior management team, ensures that specific needs and barriers to learning are identified and that all school policies are effective in reflecting the needs of looked after and previously looked-after children.

Our Designated Teacher, as a member of the leadership team, acts as advocate for the children in care on our roll, and, is included in all discussions concerning issues involving these children e.g. attendance, exclusions, sanctions etc.

The Head teacher ensures that the Designated Teacher has the capacity to respond very quickly to urgent situations.

We have high aspirations for the children and young people in care on our roll and we ensure that our Designated Teacher is able to rigorously track the progress of each child and report that data to the local authority each term.

Each CLA pupil has an annual funding grant which is ring-fenced and must be spent on improving educational progress of that child. The funding around PLAC children is an acknowledgement that children who have been previously looked after may have gaps in their learning and that for many their experiences may have an emotional impact on their ability to learn. It is used to address the needs around this and support the cohort to reach their potential. This is not child specific and a group or an intervention may be supporting two or three children at a time.

Philips High School already has systems in place – for example nurture groups to support children who struggle socially and emotionally; Place2Be counselling service, Manchester United foundation, key

workers and members of staff who can be available to support children who struggle with unstructured times.

The impact of this funding is monitored and evaluated via the PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings held each term. We monitor the impact and appropriateness of any interventions we put in place and scrutinise an evaluation of those actions. The Designated Teacher reviews the PEP each term and Pupil Premium Plus requests are promptly submitted for authorisation by the Virtual Head. We use best practice to inform resource decisions and ensure that each child/young person is able to contribute to those discussions and influence the outcome.

Looked after children are expected to make good progress – their circumstances are not seen as a reason for not doing so, but rather an imperative to make a difference. Our staff are aware that our children and young people in care may sometimes exhibit inappropriate behaviour to gain attention but awareness is not confused with acceptance and expectations remain high as our teachers are not diverted from the focus on teaching and learning.

We expect our teachers to set challenging targets when reviewing progress and we ensure that there are opportunities for enrichment activities to consolidate learning.

Special Educational needs:

The majority of looked after children have special educational needs. Of those, a significant proportion will, subject to transition arrangements resulting from changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014, have an Education Health Care Plan. Some children may have undiagnosed special needs when they start to be looked after. Our Designated Teacher, working in partnership with our SENDCO, will ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are addressed through the SEND framework as soon as possible.

Admissions:

Children Looked-After have been given the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The admission requirements for looked after children are set out in the **School Admissions Code**.

Admission authorities understand that Fair Access Protocols do not apply to looked after children and that they are 'excepted pupils' in relation to class size regulations.

We understand and comply with the local authority's duty, as **Corporate Parent**, to avoid drift and delay where there are children in care without an education placement that is appropriate to their assessed needs. We acknowledge that the local authority has powers of direction in those cases where delay occurs as a result of protracted negotiation. This school supports the School Admissions Code.

Exclusions:

As a school we understand that these young people require particular understanding and flexibility when their response or behaviour falls below acceptable levels. We ensure that everything possible is done to ensure that looked after children are never permanently excluded and that fixed term exclusions are avoided. We work together with the young person, their carer and social worker and the local authority's Virtual Head to develop and implement flexible and creative approaches to address difficulties and avoid exclusion. We understand that any disruption to the young person's learning will compound their feelings of rejection and loss of self-esteem.

It is the responsibility of all **Corporate Parents** to work together collaboratively to avoid the use of exclusions. However, where it is unavoidable due to a serious breach of this school's behaviour policy or if there is a risk to the welfare of the pupil or others within the school then we will ensure that we adhere to statutory expectation:

"Whenever we have concerns about a looked after child's behaviour, the Virtual School Head (from the child's originating home local authority) will be informed and, where necessary, involved at the earliest opportunity." The Virtual Head in Bury is Gemma Parkes.

3. The role of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child on the school's roll.

Our School's Designated Teacher (J Dalziel) for children and young people in care, undertakes and understands the statutory responsibilities of the role which includes the requirement to undertake annual training and to take responsibility for communicating all/any changes in legislation and government policy to Philips High School's Governing body.

The Designated Teacher acts as an advocate for the educational needs of all the children and young people in care on roll in our setting.

The Designated Teacher (DT) and the Head Teacher (HT) maintain and update the lists of children and young people in care on the school roll. The list provides accurate contact information, legal status, type of care Placement, social worker's details, placing authority details (in the case of a Child outside the Local Authority - COLA) etc. including the name of the Virtual Head as appropriate. The Designated Teacher ensures that all staff are aware of individual cases and can ensure that individual needs are identified and responded to appropriately.

The DT makes every effort to get to know the child/young person and will attend CLA Reviews and other essential meetings as required or will ensure appropriate, alternative, substitutes can be facilitated: as and when this is necessary, the DT will ensure feedback and staff updates as appropriate. The DT will ensure an education report is available for the Social Worker/ Independent Reviewing Officer in those cases where attendance at such meetings is not possible (e.g. during school holiday periods).

The DT, in partnership with the Social Worker, ensures that all CLA have a current, purposeful and meaningful PEP (Personal Education Plan) in Place and that the child participates fully in the development of the PEP. A new or updated PEP must be in Place within the first 20 school days of a child joining us for the first time or being admitted into care (in the case of a child/young person already on our roll). In the case of an emergency Placement, the PEP must be initiated by the Social Worker within 10 working days of their becoming looked after.

The DT works with the child's Social Worker to ensure timely review of the PEP and expects prompt distribution of the completed plan by the Social Worker to all relevant parties. The PEP must be reviewed each term: this may be done in tandem with an SEND review or other education planning meeting, as appropriate. The DT will liaise with the authority's PEP Co-ordinator (in the case of a Bury child) and will work in partnership with carers, social workers and child to ensure that the PEP is completed in timely fashion and remains relevant and meaningful.

The DT is responsible for ensuring that the Pupil Premium Grant (PP+) is fully discussed at the PEP meeting and any targets set which may need additional resources are fully costed out and a formal request for funding is submitted as soon as possible to the Virtual Head. PP+ must be used for the educational benefit of the individual child at that time. The local authority may request further information relating to evidence of the impact of the funding in order to inform further financial planning. This is in addition to the school's statutory duty to report annually to parents /carers re. the nature of that year's Pupil Premium spend and its impact on attainment.

The DT is responsible for ensuring that accurate information re CLA and PLAC pupils on roll is conveyed to the local authority, on request, and any changes which the school may be notified of are speedily communicated to the local authority's CLA and PLAC pupils Education Team.

The DT is responsible for ensuring high quality information is formulated for Head Teacher's use with QEPs, Ofsted, the SEF (or other self-evaluation mechanisms) etc.

The DT is proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise the attainment and achievement of all children and young people in care on roll.

The DT maintains an overview of CLA and PLAC pupils' attendance and, in the case of children in care to Bury, ensures compliance with Welfare Call, a commissioned service monitoring the attendance of Bury's children and young people in care.

The DT ensures that the CLA and PLAC pupils School Attendance Officer (SAO) receives full co-operation when investigating cases of poor attendance involving Bury's children and young people in care.

The DT will promote and support the recognised position re holidays in term-time for CLA and PLAC pupils and will ensure that the Head Teacher has all the necessary information should an approach be made by carers requesting any such authorisation. In the case of a child in care to Bury, the local authority's position is clear and all Carers understand that no holiday in term time can be permitted. The DT ensures that reference is made to the child's social worker and CLA and PLAC pupils Education team. In the case of children in care to other local authorities there may be differing views on this matter and it will be up to the DT to ensure full consultation with the placing authority.

The DT works in partnership with the Head teacher when considering exclusions or other disciplinary measures for CLA and PLAC pupils, supporting the authority's position that formal exclusions for children in care must only be used as a last resort and only after having consulted with the local authority's Virtual Head for CLA.

In the rare case that this school issues a fixed term exclusion for a looked after child, the DT will, as far as possible, ensure first day alternative cover in order to reduce the pressure on Placement and in line with guidelines. All cases of exclusion will be referred to the child's social worker and carers and CLA and PLAC pupils Education team without delay. In the case of a potential Permanent Exclusion, the Head teacher will immediately consult with the Virtual Head from the child's home authority, thereby allowing the earliest opportunity to discuss possible alternatives.

The DT is instrumental in collating termly attainment data for CLA and PLAC pupils and in providing that data to the CLA and PLAC pupils Education team. Our DT will ensure the data is used to inform strategies and promote the highest levels of achievement and attainment.

The DT ensures the understanding of all staff regarding matters to do with CLA and PLAC pupils.

The DT inducts new staff in such matters and regularly reviews the training needs of all staff.

The DT is released for appropriate training as required (Designated Teacher training, Virtual School training, Safeguarding, CSE, Substance misuse etc) and has opportunities to feedback to staff.

The DT and each child in care (irrespective of placing authority) will agree together which key members of staff should be aware of their circumstances.

The DT ensures that information is managed in a confidential manner, that accurate records are kept, and, that information is shared appropriately and in accordance with authority guidelines.

The DT is mindful of potentially difficult periods in the child's life e.g. transition, change of care Placement, SEND issues etc. and will ensure staff support and show understanding as appropriate.

The DT may wish to delegate certain responsibilities to other members of staff e.g. Head of Year: whilst this may be practicable, the DT must be mindful of their statutory duties and will always ensure appropriate line management and support for staff when undertaking delegated duties.

The DT ensures that any SEND issues are dealt with appropriately, that referrals are timely and outcomes achievable. The DT will ensure that the PEP is updated and the child's social worker and carer and CLA and PLAC pupils Education team are kept informed.

The DT ensures priority is given to CLA and PLAC pupils in accessing in-school opportunities and equipment (e.g. Laptops) to boost learning e.g. 1:1 Tuition, Homework Clubs etc. This will require PP+

funding in many instances and should be fully discussed at the PEP meeting and a timely application for funding made to the Virtual Head.

The DT will address any potential barriers to accessing these resources and will make strenuous efforts to ensure the child engages in any beneficial activities as appropriate.

The DT ensures fair representation of CLA and PLAC pupils in prestigious positions e.g. prefects, form reps., pupil desk receptionist etc. and works with partner agencies (e.g. Connexions) and others to ensure that appropriate support is given when choices need to be made e.g. options, College applications etc.

The DT ensures that all school staff are knowledgeable about the additional obstacles to FE and HE faced by young people in care. They will support staff in raising the child's aspirations and ensure appropriate information, advice and guidance is provided.

4. The role of Philips High School and partner agencies

Communication with Carers

All of our Carers know who the Designated Teacher (DT) is and feel welcomed by the school and able to ask questions etc.

The DT ensures that our school gives information to the carers in a timely way and takes a proactive role in ensuring that both carer and pupil are aware of important deadlines e.g. Coursework, examination dates, Parents' Evenings etc.

The DT ensures that information re. trips, study guides etc. is conveyed effectively and will check that information has been received by the right people : this is particularly pertinent at the time of Placement change which may leave the child/young person feeling lost and confused.

The DT will also receive information from carers and others and ensures that it is recorded and processed appropriately.

The DT understands the importance of the carer's role in partnership working and fosters a collaborative working relationship with both carers and parents (as appropriate).

The DT understands the need for flexibility when timing contact with a carer and /or social worker.

The DT acknowledges and fully understands the issue of Parental Responsibility: whilst Carers do not hold any (unless they have been granted specific Orders eg Special Guardianship Orders) there will be many cases where the birth parents retain full PR and the Designated Teacher must be guided by the social worker where there may be complex situations requiring sensitive handling.

Communication with Social Care

The DT promotes strong, positive, working relationships between social workers, health professionals and others and all Philips High School staff involved with the child/young person in care.

The DT recognises the importance of effective communication with all professionals involved and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that information is effectively passed between agencies.

The DT provides information as requested by social care colleagues or other professionals involved with the child/young person in care.

The DT will always be mindful of the child's legal status and will advise accordingly on the issue of **Parental Responsibility**.

Communication with the Virtual School

The Designated Teacher (DT) understands that the Virtual School team is the primary source of information concerning educational issues and, equally, the team must be kept informed of any developments in the child's life which may impact on educational progress and attainment e.g. Exclusions for behaviour, initial concerns etc.

The DT will provide any information requested by Virtual School colleagues or other professionals involved with the child/young person in care.

The DT ensures that the team is informed of any Designated Teacher name change.

The DT undertakes regular training, as offered by the Virtual School Team, in line with statutory expectations. If this is not possible, then the DT understands that 1:1 training, advice and support is always available from the Virtual School.

Giving the child/young person a voice

Everyone in our school will ensure that at every stage the child/young person will be fully involved in meetings, discussions and decision making processes in relation to their education. We will fully support them to attend their PEP meetings and to ensure that their wishes and feelings about their education are taken into account in the development, implementation and review of PEPs, PSPs, personalised planning processes etc.

If the child is too young or feels unable to attend the meeting their views will be brought by the most appropriate person and the key discussion points will be shared in an appropriate way after the meeting.

Where their wishes, feelings or preferences cannot be fully met, for example, if a specific decision is felt not to be in their best interest, then it will be carefully explained why this is the case and these conversations will be logged/noted in the PEP and raised at the next review.

Supporting transitions from care (Secondary schools)

Our school understands that the duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children extends to looked after young people aged 16 or 17 preparing to leave care.

We will ensure that the PEP is maintained as part of the preparation and review of the Pathway Plan (which will be initiated by Social Care during year 11, for those who are eligible due to the length and nature of their care history) and that it builds on the young person's educational progress.

We recognise that a Pathway Plan scrutinises the measures being taken to help the child prepare for when he/she ceases to be looked after. The Plan will consider:

- The young person's progress in education or training and
- How he/she is able to access all the services needed to prepare for training, further or higher education or employment.

We will ensure an effective transition to Further Education College or other institution and we will support these young people in making the right choices.

We acknowledge the ongoing responsibility we share as **Corporate Parents**.

Appendix 1

Factors influencing education outcomes of children in care:

Factors

Time in care
Age entering care
Placement changes
School changes
School absence
School exclusions
Placement type
School type
SEND - If a recognised need is SEMH...

Better Outcomes

The longer a child is in care
Before age 11.
Fewer changes.
Fewer changes.
Better attendance.
Fewer exclusions.
In foster care.
Mainstream school.
SDQs Lower the score...