Policy: Children Looked After (CLA) Policy

Created by:	FG
Approved By:	SJG
Date Reviewed:	April 2025
Next Review:	September 2026
Review Frequency:	Annually

Designated Person for CLA pupils in school and nursery - Miss F. Greinig (Headteacher)

Contents

Policy: Children Looked After (CLA) Policy 1
Mission Statement 1
Our Core Values 1
Statutory Policies & Guidance 1
Rationale 2
AIMS 2
The Need for Our Support 2
Who are Children looked after? 2
Private Fostering 3

Mission Statement

At Abbey School our aim is to teach to inspire, motivate and nurture the next generation of creative and critical thinkers. We work in partnership with parents and the community to achieve the highest standards. Our main goal is to encourage our children to be resilient, respectful, responsible independent learners, equipped for lifelong learning. Through stimulating, safe learning environments and excellent opportunities to succeed in and out of the classroom, we encourage children's progress and achievements.

Our Core Values

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, RESILIENCE

These 3 core values underpin the ethos of Abbey School. Our young pupils are encouraged to understand these values and how they develop, initially, at the micro level around themselves, their friendships, their families and our school. Later, our older pupils begin to understand how these self-same values affect our lives on the macro level, with all this means for their lives as they grow into adults and their environment of Devon, the United Kingdom, and also the planet in which we live.

Statutory Policies & Guidance

For more information please see: ***The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children – Statutory guidance for school governing bodies.***
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01046-2009BKT-EN.PDF
Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked after Children)
http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-00523-2009.pdf
Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools – Guidance for Schools
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01047-2009.pdf

Rationale

Nationally, Children Looked After significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Children Looked After are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. The most common reason for children to be looked after is as a result of abuse/ and or neglect. Appropriate staff will be made aware of the different Care Orders and what they mean.

AIMS

The school will champion the needs of Children Looked After, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

1. To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

2. To support our children looked after and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school activities.

3. To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CLA as for all children.

4. To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of CLA pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.

5. To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our CLA pupils

The Need for Our Support

The designated safeguarding lead should have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously children looked after safe. When dealing with children looked after and previously children looked after, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

Who are Children looked after?

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).

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. 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.

CLA reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted.

Our school's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children looked after is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations and raising aspiration
- Promoting inclusion
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and well-being
- Minimising exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for CLA pupils in school and nursery:

- knowing who all the CLA pupils are in school and nursery and ensuring that availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required.
- Attending relevant training about CLA and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CLA
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CLA should learn.
- Helping school staff understand the issues that affect the learning of CLA such as differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of AfL.
- Making sure that CLA pupils are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Removing the barriers to learning for CLA.
- Ensuring any CLA new to the school are welcomed positively and assessed when they start at the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching.
- Developing personalised learning packages for CLA in conjunction with the relevant teaching staff.
- Ensuring that the CLA in our school have a voice in setting learning targets for themselves.
- Championing for CLA.
- Leading on developing and implementing the PEP within the school. The social worker is responsible for initiating the PEP process completing the front page of the PEP form.
- Monitoring the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved.
- Ensuring the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred without delay.
- Liaising with the Virtual School in all aspects of the CLA progress and support.
- Convening urgent multi-agency meetings if a CLA is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Arranging for a mentor or key worker to whom the child can talk to. Arranging for the CLA to be supported by their peers.
- Collaborating with the DSL to produce a report for governance on a termly basis that includes anonymised details of CLA children.
- Promoting good home-school links and the importance of education as a way of improving life chances for CLA.

Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is 18 provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children. Staff should notify the DSL or Deputy DSL who should then notify the local authority to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.