Harehills Primary School



Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Children Looked After Policy

Approved by:	Nick Long Chair of Governors	**Policy Date:** September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	**Next review due by:** September 2027
Staff Responsible:	Janet Haywood	

Harehills Primary School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

Designated Staff for CLA:

- Judy Wood - Headteacher
- Hollie Melling - Designated Teacher for CLA
- Caroline Pallas - Deputy Headteacher
- Janet Haywood - Pastoral Care & Safeguarding Lead/Child Looked After Co-ordinator
- Nick Long - Governor with responsibility for CLA

Supporting all Children Looked After

High level responsibilities

Parents want their children to have the best start in life and to reach their full potential. As corporate parents, local authorities should have equally high aspirations for the children they look after.
At Harehills Primary School we will endeavour to close the attainment and progress gap between children looked after and their peers. Creating a culture of high aspirations for them will be a top priority.
We will also strive to promote a culture that takes account of the child's views according to age and understanding in identifying and meeting their educational needs.

Pupil Premium

Children looked after are one of the groups of pupils that attract pupil premium funding. Harehills Primary School receives a pupil premium grant allocated based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 11 on August 31st as recorded in the latest children looked after data return. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of children looked after and close the attainment gap between this group and their peers.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in 'Statutory Guidance on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004' (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of CLA.

The aims of the school are to:

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

Rationale and principles

Children Looked After – CLA – 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 extracurricular 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.
Most 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

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 20of 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.

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

• They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be because of any of the following:

- ❖ A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
- ❖ A Special Guardianship Order an Adoption Order

• They appear to the governing board to have:

- ❖ Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
- ❖ Ceased to be in that state care because of being adopted

Personal Education Plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the social worker and the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Virtual School Head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Staff will:

- Be an advocate for CLA within 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 CLA are 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 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 PEP's and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly 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 governors 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 extracurricular 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 Governing Body 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
- Contribute and share information for Governors' meetings to include
    - The number of CLA on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
    - Their attendance compared to other pupils
    - The attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils
    - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
    - The destinations of pupils who leave the school
    - Attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of CLA
    - Arrange a mentor or buddy (adult and/or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, i.e. the learning mentor, particularly when the pupil is new to school
    - Ensure that any SEND is 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 an EHCP than the general school population

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- Follow school procedures
- Keep the Designated Staff informed about CLA's progress
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of CLA
- Positively promote the raising of a CLA's self-esteem
- Ensure any CLA is supported sensitively, and that confidentiality s maintained
- Be familiar with the schools' policy and guidance on CLA and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the Designated Staff where a CLA is experiencing difficulties
- Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the schools' 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 always informed
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to other professionals/parents/carers/pupils as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports when required

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritise CLA according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA
- Ensure there is a Designated Staff member of staff for CLA
- Liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Staff and all other staff to ensure the needs of CLA are met
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for CLA who links with the Designated Staff
- Ensure the schools' policies and procedures give CLA equal access in respect of
    - Admission to school
    - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
    - Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
    - Work experience and careers guidance
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for CLA
- Ensure the Designated Staff are invited to the exclusion meetings of CLA

Leeds Local Authority will:

- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for CLA
- Ensure the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other pupil in Leeds
- Ensure that CLA receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every CLA has a school to go to within 20 days of coming not care or of coming to Leeds from another authority
- Make sure that each CLA has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Staff for CLA and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of CLA and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs

Admissions

The Governing Body endorses Leeds Local Authority policy that believes that the admissions criteria should not discriminate against CLA pupils. This stance is also endorsed by Leeds Local Authority Admissions Board. Due to care placement changes, CLA may enter school mid-term. It is vital we give children a positive welcome. Additional support such as pre-entry transition visits may help the new pupil settle.

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

Allocation of resources
The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Monitoring the progress of CLA
The social worker for CLA should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP – within 20 days of joining school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school accesses each CLA's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.
The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. CLA will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing officer or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Staff and noted on the PEP.

Record Keeping
The Designated Staff will know who all the CLA in school are and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. It is important that the school flags CLA status appropriately in the schools' information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development
We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support CLA. Part of the Designated Staff's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with CLA.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers
At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers, to enable CLA to achieve their full 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/social workers/Residential childcare worker
- Educational Psychologists and others from the Local Authority SEN services
- Medical teams/School Nurses
- CAMHS
- Attendance Improvement Officers
- 2gether Cluster

CLA policy review and evaluation
We consider the CLA policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and procedure each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.