

# Children Looked After (CLA) Policy

OUR SCHOOL PRAYER:

*What does the Lord ask of you?*

*To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6vs.8

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## Statement of Intent

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do. All members of the school community are committed to upholding the St Michael's Church of England Christian values:

- to show love, care, and kindness to all in our community
- to value what we have and to share with others
- to enable everyone to achieve their full potential

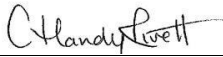


Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after children are of real concern. Children and young people who are looked after require special treatment and positive discrimination in their favour in order to improve their situation.

St Michael's Church of England High School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, continuity and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- encourage pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable and to make good progress from what they are currently already able to do
- ensure that pupils enjoy high-quality teaching and are enjoying a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation
- plan realistically and use the school's resources efficiently in order to ensure the school meets the needs of the children
- promote a positive approach in all aspects of school life
- help pupils develop their cultural, moral, and social understanding.

St Michael's Church of England High School believes that, in partnership with Sandwell Local Authority and Sandwell Virtual School, we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of children who are Looked After.

Signed by:

 _____	Headteacher	Date: <u>14/07/2022</u>
 _____	Co-Chair of governors	Date: <u>14/07/2022</u>
 _____	Co-Chair of governors	Date: <u>14/07/2022</u>

<b>Date adopted</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
<b>Date of review</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
<b>Review date</b>	June 2025

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2021) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
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1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Code of Conduct and Home School Agreement
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy (pupils)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

## 2. Definitions

2.1 "Looked-after children (CLA)" are defined as:

- children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989
- children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation
- children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility
- children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents

2.2 "Previously CLA (PCLA)" are defined as:

- children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements order
- children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society)

### **3. Aims of the Policy:**

- to provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children
- to support our CLA and give them access to every opportunity to achieve their potential and enjoy learning
- to fulfil our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of CLA by ensuring high expectations and our Christian ethos support equality for all

3.1 This policy recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- prioritising education
- having high expectations
- changing and challenging attitudes
- achieving continuity and stability
- early intervention – priority action
- listening to children

### **3.2 In pursuit of this policy we will:**

- nominate a Designated Teacher for CLA who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them
- nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of CLA in the school are taken into account and support the Designated Teacher in their role
- support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that training needs are met

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

4.1 The Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA is responsible for:

- being an advocate for CLA
- ensuring a smooth and welcoming introduction for the child and carer(s) and parents where possible
- attending transition Personal Education Plans (PEPs) at primary school, wherever possible
- ensuring a smooth transition into secondary school
- ensuring that each CLA has an identified member of staff they can talk to
- ensuring that a date is set for the completion of a PEP as early as is deemed necessary in order to support attainment and progress
- ensuring that PEPs take account of any Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) or Behaviour Intervention Plans (BIPs)
- ensuring entry to examinations for all CLA and identifying where concessions may be required
- co-ordinating support for the child in the school and liaising with other professionals and carers as necessary
- ensuring appropriate staff and the named CLA governor receives relevant information and training
- ensuring confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis

- providing written information to assist planning/review meetings, such as CLA reviews, liaising with IROs (Independent Reviewing Officer), and ensure attendance as far as possible
- liaise with subject staff to identify individual student needs where PP+ can be used to purchase items to support their learning
- liaise with Virtual School staff regarding the appropriate spending of PP+ to support individual student's learning needs
- encourage CLA to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded
  - building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to CLA and PCLA
  - promoting the educational achievement of CLA and PCLA at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales
  - acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE
  - promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations
  - ensuring CLA are involved in setting their own targets
  - advising staff on teaching strategies for CLA
  - ensuring that CLA are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support
  - leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored
  - liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met
  - being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding CLA and PCLA due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise
  - working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP
  - working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP
  - working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all CLA and PCLA

#### 4.2 The Governing Board is responsible for:

- ensuring that the admissions criteria prioritise CLA
- ensuring all governors are aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA
- ensuring that there is a named Designated Teacher for CLA
- nominating a governor to liaise with the Designated Teacher, receive regular progress reports and provide feedback to the Governing Board
- for child protection and confidentially reasons, ensuring that information is collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality, of the pupils concerned
- reviewing the effective implementation of this policy and reviewing this at least every three years

4.3 The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales
- ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's CLA, including those placed out of authority
- building relationships with health, education, and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to CLA and PCLA
- working with the school to ensure all CLA in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential
- acting as the educational advocate for CLA
- acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PCLA as effectively as possible
- managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for CLA
- ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
  - maintain an up-to-date roll of the CLA who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance, and progress
  - inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA
  - ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers, and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP
  - ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CLA
  - avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision
  - ensure the education achievement of CLA is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare
  - report regularly on the attainment, progress, and school attendance of CLA through the authority's corporate parenting structures

44 The headteacher is responsible for:

- appointing the designated teacher for CLA and PCLA
- allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties
- overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
  - the number of CLA and PCLA in the school
  - an analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
  - the attendance of CLA and PCLA, compared to other pupil groups
  - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA is a key priority
- ensuring PP+ for PCLA is managed effectively
- promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA

4.5 The DSL is responsible for:

- keeping up-to-date records of CLA's respective social worker and VSH
- promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding CLA and PCLA as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm
- where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver

4.6 The SENCO is responsible for:

- ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CLA and PCLA
- liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists, and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PCLA

4.7 All staff are responsible for:

- as with all children, ensuring that they have high expectations and aspirations
- celebrating the educational and personal achievement of CLA
- ensuring entry to examinations for CLA
- be familiar with the policy for CLA and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation required as part of review meetings
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a CLA is experiencing difficulty
- identify individual student's needs and advise DT of resources, books or equipment that can be purchased from their PP+ to support learning
- being aware of CLA and PCLA and providing them with support and encouragement
- preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding
- being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards CLA and PCLA
- being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding CLA and PCLA due to their increased vulnerability to harm and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible
- promoting the self-esteem of CLA and PCLA

## **5. Personal education plan (PEP)**

5.1 All CLA must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

5.2 The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

5.3 The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher, and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.



- 5.4 The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:
- on-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work
  - suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion
  - transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school
  - school attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate
  - support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
    - support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications
    - careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training, and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities, and the outcomes they want to achieve
    - out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests
- 5.5 The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a CLA or PCLA's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.
- 5.6 Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

## **6. Working with agencies and the Virtual School Head (VSH)**

- 6.1 The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the CLA social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- 6.2 The IRO will coordinate their statutory review meetings, with which the school will participate.
- 6.3 The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions, or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard CLA and PCLA.
- 6.4 Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- 6.5 The designated teacher for CLA and PCLA will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- 6.6 Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- 6.7 PP+ for PCLA will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. The school will work with the VSH to manage the allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of CLA and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

6.8 The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding CLA who are absent without authorisation.

6.9 The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CLA and PCLA.

## **7. Training**

7.1 The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of CLA and PCLA will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- school admissions arrangements
- SEND
- attendance
- exclusions
- homework
- GCSE options
- managing and challenging behaviour
- promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training, and employment
- safeguarding

7.2 All training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep CLA and PCLA safe.

## **8. Safeguarding**

8.1 The school recognises that many CLA and PCLA have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

8.2 All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practised in observing and identifying these indicators amongst CLA and PCLA as soon as possible.

8.3 Where a CLA or PCLA has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g., responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

8.4 The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of CLA and PCLA can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

8.5 Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over CLA or PCLA in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8.6 Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a CLA or PCLA is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

## **9. Pupil mental health**

- 9.1 CLA and PCLA are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training, and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- 9.2 The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CLA and PCLA, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- 9.3 The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst CLA and PCLA may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with CLA or PCLA are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination, or mood of these pupils.
- 9.4 A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used if required to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about CLA and previously-CLA's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.
- 9.5 The school's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that CLA or PCLA may face.

## **10. Exclusions**

- 10.1 Past experiences of CLA and PCLA will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Management Policy.
- 10.2 The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any CLA.
- 10.3 Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a CLA to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.
- 10.4 Exclusion will only be used as a last resort after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.
- 10.5 The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.
- 10.6 Permanent exclusion will only occur where there have been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Management Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

## **11. Pupils with SEND**

- 11.1 Support for CLA with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.
- 11.2 The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PCLA.
- 11.3 The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that CLA and PCLA with SEND are supported in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for CLA, e.g., where CLA are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

## **12. Children Looked After Pupil Premium**

- 12.1 The Coalition Government introduced the Pupil Premium in 2011 to provide additional funding for those children classed as having a deprived background, and those who have been looked after (by a local authority) for more than one day. In addition, the Service Premium was introduced for children whose parent(s) are or have served in the armed forces since 2011.
- 12.2 St Michael's adopts the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council guidelines for Pupil Premium for looked after children, and we operate under the Sandwell Virtual School's procedures and policies.
- 12.3 As a Sandwell school, St Michael's applies the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council policies, protocols, and guidelines for all CLA in our care.
- 12.4 If a neighbouring local authority places a CLA at St Michael's, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council policies, protocols and guidelines will be adopted in order to maintain a consistent and streamlined approach within school.
- 12.5 The DfE allocates a provisioned amount and, in the 2022-23 financial year, the amount of CLA funding available is £2,410 per annum:
- £2,410 per looked after child aged between 4 and 15
  - £2,410 per pupil who has left local authority care because of the following:
    - adoption
    - special guardianship order
    - child arrangement order

## **13. Use of the Children Looked After Premium**

- 13.1 In accordance with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Virtual School:
- most of the CLA funding will be distributed to schools as they are best placed to decide on the interventions and support that will work for the children on their roll

- the Virtual School will withhold a proportion of the funds to enable it to target children who need additional support; typically, this is approximately £500 depending on the Local Authority Each LA has its own division of funding in place
- post CLA funding is paid in its entirety directly into school
- schools are required to publish on their website how Pupil Premium is used for all pupils, and in each PEP, it should be explained how the individual pupil is benefitting from pupil premium
- schools are not required to provide individual accounts for each CLA
- the Designated Teacher, in liaison with the Headteacher, will proportion funding as specified within appendix 1

13.2 Other authorities may have specific rules which will not allow the school to apply the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council guidelines for allocating money for CLA under the care of other authorities. In such circumstances, the Carers and Social Workers of the affected CLA will be informed of the procedures of the relevant authority.

## **14. Evaluation and Review**

14.1 The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated annually and reviewed every three years. If changes are required, this will be done as required if outside of the three-year review cycle.

## Appendix 1 – 2022-23 Pupil Premium for CLA students

At St Michael's Church of England High School, CLA are nurtured and supported both academically and pastorally in order for them to achieve their full potential. In order to support the attainment and progress of CLA, St Michael's will use Pupil Premium for:

- a contribution towards to a pastoral support network in school, including a designated teacher, SEMH Coordinator, Assistant Head of Year (non-teaching) and Family Liaison officer
- equipment and resources (including photocopying costs) and curriculum-based fields trips to enhance learning and aid progress
- music lessons (where the identified CLA plays a musical instrument)
- bespoke programmes and visiting speakers brought in specifically for disadvantaged students' egg, Positively Mad, Aim Higher, Maths Watch and the Skill Show
- contributions towards the purchase of on-line programmes to support learning egg, Hegarty Maths and Bedrock
- tailored, in-class intervention or withdrawal for subject knowledge enhancement with an academic coach (where available and appropriate to the CLA individual need, as advised by the Designated Teacher in discussion with the class teacher)
- after-school extracurricular activity or intervention programmes as published by individual departments
- referral to SEMH Coordinator and participation within programmes such as online counselling (Kooth) service, mood management, well-being programmes, Chin-up, Keeping Safe, self-esteem, Healthy Relationships, On-line Safety, Bereavement Support, VIP, Fresh Start, and Sulp
- laptops and private tuition are also funded in consultation with the Virtual School. Additional Funding can be requested to support this.