

Bedford High School
A Specialist Business and Enterprise College
Work Hard – Be Respectful – Take Responsibility



**Policy for the Education of Looked
After and Previously Looked After Children**

School Address	Manchester Road Leigh WN7 2LU
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Document control

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Governing Committee	Standards
Electronic copies of this plan are available from	FROG VLN
Hard copies of this plan are available from	School Business Manager
Public sector equality duty guidance considered	Yes

Introduction

This policy should be considered alongside the statutory guidance.

- The Designated Teacher for Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children – Statutory Guidance on their Roles and Responsibilities. DfE, February 2018.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (statutory guidance, updated August 2024)
- Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker (Virtual School Head duties)
- SEND Reform White Paper / Every Child Achieving and Thriving (2026 consultation proposals)
- SEND Code of Practice (current statutory framework)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and Children and Social Work Act 2017

Children Looked After (CLA), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and children with a social worker may experience barriers that can impact on their education, wellbeing, attendance and wider development. Bedford High School recognises the importance of providing high expectations, appropriate support and effective intervention to ensure that all children, including those with experience of care, are able to achieve their full potential.

The school will work in partnership with the Virtual School Head/Virtual School Team, carers, parents and guardians, social care and other relevant agencies to identify and address barriers to attendance, attainment, progress, behaviour, wellbeing and participation.

At Bedford High School, we are committed to equality, inclusion and respect for all members of our community. We do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We recognise and celebrate individuality and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy reflects the statutory duties and guidance relating to the education of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, including the role of the Designated Teacher in promoting educational achievement and wellbeing.

Key Contacts

Role	Name	Telephone	Email
Head teacher	Paul McCaffery	01942 909009	P.McCaffery@bedford.wigan.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Designated Teacher for Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously	Rebecca Ramsden		R.Ramsden@bedford.wigan.sch.uk

Looked After (PLAC) Children			
SENDSCO	Amy Duffy		
Deputy SENDSCO	Maryanne Greenough		SEND@bedford.wigan.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Bridget Moss Paul McCaffery Nikki Quinn		B.Moss@bedford.wigan.sch.uk P.McCaffery@bedford.wigan.sch.uk N.Quinn@bedford.wigan.sch.uk
Nominated Governor	Mrs L Hayes	N/A	
Chair of Governors	David Whitehead	N/A	

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Children Looked After (CLA)	A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer. Looked after children are: living with foster parents living in a residential children's home or living in residential settings like schools or secure units.
Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)	Previously looked-after children are those who are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of: an adoption special guardianship child arrangements order were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.
A child in care returning to birth family	A child who has returned home to live with birth parent(s), having been in care (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014), is not defined as a previously looked-after child.
Children	Any person under the age of 18 years

Children with a Social Worker	Children with a social worker are children who have been assessed as needing statutory support from children's social care, including children subject to a child protection plan and children receiving support through child in need arrangements
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The Governing Body

The Governors will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance. The governing body recognises the importance of championing the educational achievement and wellbeing of children and young people who are Looked After Children (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). The governing body is committed to improving outcomes for this group and ensuring that appropriate support, challenge and provision are in place to enable them to achieve their full potential. The governing body will ensure that the following arrangements are established, monitored and effective:

- A Designated Governor for CLA, PLAC and children with a social worker.
- A Designated Teacher for CLA, PLAC and children with a social worker.
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) completion and how the Student Premium Plus (PP+) is used.
- All staff in school will have a clear understanding of the issues that affect CLA/PLAC; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality.
- Monitoring of student progress
- annual Designated Teacher training
- regular safeguarding and progress updates are shared with governors, including
- trauma-informed practice training for relevant staff
- attachment awareness training for relevant staff
- SEND and inclusion updates
- attendance training for relevant staff
- Ensure the Designated Teacher has appropriate status, seniority, training and time to fulfil the role effectively

The governing body will receive anonymised annual updates regarding:

- attainment
- attendance
- suspensions
- exclusions
- PEP completion rates
- pupil premium plus impact
- participation in enrichment activities
- SEND identification and support

The Designated Teacher (DT)

The Designated Teacher will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance. The Designated Teacher is the central point of initial contact within Bedford High School. By implementing effective policy and procedures, the Designated Teacher will ensure a consistent whole school approach to best support CLA/PLAC students.

The Designated Teacher will take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students. The Designated Teacher will ensure all staff:

- Have high expectations of children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness and trauma informed practice).
- Understand how important it is to see children as individuals.
- Appreciate the central importance of the CLA's PEP.
- For PLAC, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

The Designated Teacher, SEND department and Raising Achievement Officer (RAO) will have a direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of students who are CLA/PLAC.

The DT will:

- Ensure the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding is used effectively within school to have the greatest positive impact on children's learning. This includes ensuring:
 - parents and guardians of PLAC are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+
 - the funding is linked to identified barriers
 - is recorded within the PEP
 - has measurable intended outcomes
 - is reviewed at least termly
 - demonstrates impact on attendance, attainment, engagement, participation or wellbeing
 - PP+ will not be used as a general funding stream and decisions will be based on the individual needs of the child
- Ensure students who are CLA/PLAC are prioritised for support.
- Oversee and quality assure the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process, ensuring there are accurate records of discussions and decisions. Although the Raising Achievement Officers assist in preparing for PEP meetings, the DT attends each PEP for all CLA students and ensures they take place a minimum of three times per academic year to review support and deploy effective resources.

The Raising Achievement Officer (RAO)

- First point of contact for foster carers/guardians/family members/external agencies.
- Ensure CLA/PLAC students are listened to; encouraged to participate; and believe they can achieve through an ethos of aspiration.
- Closely monitor school attendance and suspensions. When a child is at risk of either a suspension or permanent exclusion, the RAO - working with the DT, VSH, social care and the child's carers - will be asked to consider what additional assessment and support is needed to address the cause of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for suspension.
- Ensure the DT, Virtual School Team and social worker are made aware of any suspensions and/or unauthorised absences from school.
- Prepares for each PEP for students in their year group, liaising with the DT and school staff, in preparation for each meeting.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

- Report to governors on the provision for, and progress of, CLA/PLAC students.
- Ensure staff are aware that the provision to support CLA/PLAC students is a key school priority.

- Give the Designated Teacher for CLA/PLAC, the time and facilities to carry out his / her job description and to support them at all times in their work.
- Ensure the voice of CLA/PLAC students is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs.
- Ensure Student Premium Plus is allocated and used for the benefit of CLA/PLAC to support progress, attainment, engagement and well-being.
- Provide continuing professional development for staff on issues pertaining to CLA/PLAC, such as Attachment and Trauma.
- Work in partnership with the Virtual School, Children's Social Care and other relevant services to share information and promote progress and achievement.

All School Staff

- Provide a non-judgemental and welcoming learning environment for all students.
- Demonstrate high expectations for all students, including students who are CLA/PLAC, catering for their needs through quality first teaching.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families.
- Understand how important it is to see students who are CLA/PLAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group.
- Appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between stakeholders and, most importantly, the student's own understanding of how they are being supported.
- Appreciate the role of social workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.
- For PLAC, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education.

Students

The school will ensure that CLA and PLAC students:

- contribute to PEP targets
- participate in decisions affecting them
- have opportunities to express views safely
- know who their trusted adult is in school
- receive feedback on actions taken following their views

Behaviour and Safety

Suspension should be a last resort. The school will liaise with the Virtual School, carers, social worker and relevant professionals with regards to suspensions and where appropriate, identify alternative strategies and additional support.

NB: This does not prevent the headteacher exercising statutory exclusion powers where necessary.

Attendance and Safeguarding

The school will:

- monitor attendance of CLA and PLAC pupils at least half-termly
- identify students at risk of persistent absence (below 90%) and students at risk of severe absence (below 50%), in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance.

- ensure attendance concerns are discussed through the PEP process
- work proactively with carers, social workers, Virtual School staff and attendance teams
- avoid punitive approaches and instead seek to understand barriers to attendance
- consider trauma, attachment, SEND and mental health needs when planning attendance support

The school recognises that CLA, PLAC and children with social workers may be at increased risk of:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- missing education
- online harm
- mental health difficulties
- substance misuse
- family instability
- persistent absence

All safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with KCSIE and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Bedford High School adopts a trauma-informed and relational approach to supporting CLA and PLAC students.

Staff will:

- understand adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- recognise the impact of developmental trauma
- use relational approaches before sanctions
- promote belonging and inclusion
- avoid unnecessary suspension wherever possible

SEND and Inclusion

The school recognises that Children Looked After (CLA) are more likely than their peers to experience additional needs, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as social, emotional and mental health needs linked to previous experiences of loss, trauma or disruption.

The Designated Teacher and SENDCo will work collaboratively to ensure that children who are CLA/PLAC receive appropriate support through a coordinated and inclusive approach.

This includes:

- identifying emerging needs at the earliest opportunity
- ensuring appropriate assessment and effective support through the graduated approach
- considering the impact of attachment, trauma and adverse childhood experiences when planning support
- ensuring SEND provision and care planning are aligned where appropriate
- reviewing support and progress through the PEP process
- promoting inclusive classroom practice and high expectations for all learners
- ensuring reasonable adjustments are implemented where required

- supporting effective transitions, including changes in placement, school moves and post-16 pathways

The school will promote inclusive practice in line with the SEND Code of Practice, equality duties and statutory guidance, ensuring that children who are CLA/PLAC are supported to achieve their educational, social and emotional potential.

Transition Arrangements

The school will provide enhanced support during:

- primary-secondary transition
- in-year admissions
- care placement changes
- post-16 transitions
- reintegration following absence or suspension

The Designated Teacher will ensure information is shared appropriately and support plans are reviewed.

Information Sharing

Information will be shared appropriately with carers, social workers, Virtual School Heads, SEND professionals and other agencies in accordance with safeguarding duties, GDPR legislation and the child's best interests.

Linked Policies

Behaviour, Rewards & Anti-Bullying Policy

Safeguarding, Child Protection & Early Help Policy

SEND Policy