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WOODSIDE

Supporting the Educational
Outcomes for Children who
are Looked After (CLA) and
Previously Looked After
(PLAC)

Accepted by Trustees in: Spring 2026

Due for next review in: Spring 2027

www.woodsideschool.co.uk

The National Position

Nationally, Looked After children (including children who have previously been Looked-After or in care) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. All schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Who are Children in Care?

NSPCC guidance states:

A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child.

Children Looked After (CLA) are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.

Local terminology

Taking into account the views of children in care within Shropshire, the terms 'Child Looked After' or CLA is the preferred reference rather than Looked After Children or LAC.

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, as 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 (Section 20).

Previously looked after children (PLAC) are defined as:

- Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they 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).

Our Approach at Woodside Primary School

Our approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children who are Looked After is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals.

As for all our pupils, we are committed to helping every Child Looked After to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

Our Trustees are committed to providing quality education for all children and will:

- Ensure Children Looked After (CLA) are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked-After Children) (England) Regulations 2006
- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the Act") and The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.
- The Local Authority statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of CLA [includes those LAC placed out-of-authority].
- The Children and Families Act 2014, which requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer to make sure that its duty is properly discharged - referred to as the Virtual School Head
- Ensure a Designated Teacher for CLA is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented, and regularly reviewed for every Looked-After Child, in line with the LA's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Identify a trustee as Designated Governor for CLA.

This policy links with several other school policies and it is important that Trustees/governors have regard to the needs of Child Looked After when reviewing them.

How will the Impact of the Policy be Measured and Reviewed?

The impact of the policy will be seen in improved outcomes for CLA:

- Inclusion [zero permanent exclusion]
- Attendance
- Attainment
- Progression
- The quality of plans for CLA in Personal Education Plans [PEPs]
- The views of children [captured in PEPs]

All of the above is summarised in the annual report of the designated teacher to the governing body, and any review with the Virtual School of the report and outcomes for children. The policy is based on a set of principles, which in turn are linked to statutory guidance. It is expected that all partners will be familiar with the guidance. Key VS documents that underpin it can be found on the VS website <http://www.shropshirelq.net>

Virtual School Heads

Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT) is responsible for managing pupil premium funding for CLA by a local authority and allocating it to schools. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Acting as the educational advocate for CLA.
- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- 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 PLAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all within the school CLA are fully supported in reaching their full potential.

- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC as effectively as possible.
 - 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, Carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) 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 and PLAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibility for promoting their health and welfare.
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of CLA through the authority's Corporate Parenting structures.

Virtual School Heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority they work for.

The Responsibility of the Headteacher

Louise Jones is the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After, whose role is set out below. She reports directly to the Headteacher. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.

Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:

- Positive achievements of CLA and PLAC.
- The number of CLA and PLAC in the school.
- An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups.
- The attendance of CLA and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups.
- The level of suspensions and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups.
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA and PLAC is a key priority.
- Actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA.
- Actions the school will take to develop/improve the above.
- 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 PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of CLA and PLAC at the school.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the virtual school.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring CLA are involved in reviewing and setting their own targets.
- Gaining the knowledge and skills to advise and support staff on teaching and behaviour strategies for CLA and PLAC.
- Ensuring that CLA and PLAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Supporting new CLA admissions to the school:
 - Provide pre-admission support and where appropriate, an enhanced 'welcome' phase in the first days and weeks at the school.
 - On admission of a CLA to the school, liaising with the VS to agree a date for a PEP meeting.

The Responsibility of the Trustees

Our Trustees:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for CLA and PLAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.

- Ensuring the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring CLA and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if and when necessary.
- Reviewing the Annual Report produced by the Designated Teacher to evaluate the progress of CLA in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the Headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.
- Providing a nominated trustee who should:
 - Ensure that a school's self-audit of provision for CLA and PLAC is undertaken.
 - Ensure that the school's policies and procedures ensure that CLA and PLAC have at least equal access to all aspects of the school life.
 - Attend meetings/training organised by the Virtual School to provide updates and training to nominated Trustees.

Procedures: The Trustee Body:

- Monitors the academic progress of Children who are Looked After (CLA)
- Ensures that Children who are Looked After (CLA) are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Works to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Children who are Looked After (CLA) achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- Ensures that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Receive an annual report setting out:
 1. The number of CLA on the school's roll (if any)
 2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils
 3. Their SAT scores, compared to other pupils
 4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
 5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school
 6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

The Responsibility of the Designated Lead

Our Designated Lead (Louise Jones) in partnership with our Safeguarding & Inclusion Manager (Lindsay Morris):

- Ensures a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Ensures that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensures that each CLA has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the

Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes. Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take.

They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection to:

- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.

- Co-ordinate any support for the CLA that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Encourage Children who are Looked After (CLA) to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.

The Responsibility of SENCo

Our SENCo is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CLA if the child has Special Educational Needs.
- Ensuring the Annual Review of an Education Health and Care Plan is held in conjunction with the PEP.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of CLA/PLAC.
- Ensuring timely assessment and intervention is in place through provision mapping and allocation of resources to meet specific needs.

The Responsibility of all Staff

All of our staff:

- Being aware of CLA and PLAC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Apply a positive behaviour approach or relational approach to CLA and PLAC through developing an awareness of attachment theory and evidence-based trauma approaches – plus understanding the young person's journey.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA, as for all pupils.
- Maintain CLA's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable CLA to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all CLA.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of CLA.
- Being vigilant for any signs of:
 - bullying or peer on peer abuse towards CLA or PLAC.
 - safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CLA and PLAC.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

It is statutory for all CLA to have a PEP and it is an integral part of their Care Plan. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. It will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

Our school will work with other professionals and the child's carers, using 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.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- If relevant, access to quality nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education agreed with the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion (this should be in place on the 2nd day of any fixed term suspension).
- 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 at least 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 focuses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

Working with Agencies and the Virtual School Head Teacher

- Woodside School will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers, in addition to parents/carers or staff at residential homes where relevant.
- Our school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual EHCP review at the same time as a PEP review.
- Our school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, suspensions, exclusions or attendance issues.
- Our school will complete attendance records on the online ePEP system on a weekly basis. This will enable the VS to monitor the attendance of CLA and react promptly if attendance falls or unexplained absences occur. Our Designated Teacher will ensure prompt and communication with the Virtual School if any CLA is absent without authorisation.
- Where a Reduced Timetable (RTT) or Flexible Learning Programme* is agreed in principle with Corporate Parent and any other persons with Parental Responsibility, then our Designated Teacher will communicate and liaise with the Virtual School, sending the RTT or Flexible Learning Programme (FLP) document for the VS Head Teacher's consideration and signature if approved.
- 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.
- Our Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC will communicate with the Virtual School Link and Child's Social Worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP to a high standard.
- Through our Designated Teacher the school will work with the Virtual School, 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.
- Our Designated Teacher will ensure that the PEP clearly shows how the PP+ Grant will be used. If necessary, this may involve consulting the Virtual School prior to a PEP meeting to gain advice on using the PP+ most effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- Additional funding for further intervention can be requested at any time, not just at the PEP.

*A FLP is where the child is off site for any element of their school week e.g. at alternative provision.

Pupil Mental Health

CLA and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Our Designated Teacher has awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

Our Designated Teacher will work with the Virtual School to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CLA and PLAC, and when appropriate, know how to access further assessment and support.

The PEP includes measures for social, emotional and behavioural development, these will be completed and used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about each of our CLA's emotional wellbeing.

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

Past experiences of CLA and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour or Relational Policy, ensuring that it is suitably flexible and inclusive.

- **Designated Teacher for LAC & PLAC** [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)
- **Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children** [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

Our school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance and, as far as possible, avoid suspension for any CLA or PLAC. Where a suspension is considered, our school will consult with the Virtual School prior to the suspension, to consider what additional support can be provided to prevent this. In the event of a suspension, our school will ensure that suitable alternative provision will be in place from the first day of the suspension.

No CLA should be permanently excluded and our school will always seek support and advice from the Virtual School at the earliest opportunity in order to prevent this, similarly for Previously Looked After Children.

Our school will have regard to Shropshire's Inclusion Strategy and make use of support available - such as the Inclusion Advice Forum.

Pupils with SEND

Our SENCo, class teacher, Designated Teacher and specialists will involve the Virtual School/ Social Worker, carers/parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. Support for CLA with SEND or where SEND is being identified will be included for discussion in the child's PEP and Care Plan reviews. Our school refers to The SEND local offer | Shropshire Council

Legal Framework

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

[Children Act 1989](#)

[The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)

[Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#)

[Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#)

[Children and Families Act 2014](#)

[Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

DfE (2018) [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children](#)

DfE (2024) [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

DfE (2024) [Keeping children safe in education 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

DFE Dec 2023) [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

DFE (2018) [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

DFE (2024) [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

SEND COP June 2014 - Updated April 2020 [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

SEND Review 2022 - [Special educational needs publication June 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

School Attendance Guidance September 2024 - [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools November 2018 - [Mental health and behaviour in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Education Inspection Framework September 2019 updated July 2023 - [Education inspection framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Early Years inspection framework September 2019 updated July 2022 - [Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

School Inspection Handbook Ofsted September 2024 - [Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
[School monitoring handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)