



Denefield School

Policy on the education of children looked after (and previously looked after) by the local authority

Approved by Standards on	14 January 2026
Date of next review	January 2029
Review cycle	Triennial
Policy control sheet updated	Yes
Type of policy	Statutory
Policy owner	DSL
Location of policy	Website

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Context

The national outcomes for Children Looked After by the local authority (CLA) in terms of educational achievement and subsequent life chances are significantly lower than other children of similar ability. The majority of CLA have been victims of abuse or neglect. It therefore follows that **these students need special treatment and positive discrimination in their favour** if this situation is to be improved. At Denefield School we put in place strategies that allow these children to succeed in all aspects of life in line with children of similar abilities.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- a previously looked-after child (PCLA) is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

For the most part children who have previously been looked after by the local authority are referred to as PCLA in this policy. While these students generally do not have a social worker or a PEP, they are subject to similar support and consideration at school.

A private agreement is not public care; i.e., when a child lives with friends or relatives by private arrangement and these children are not designated as CLA. Children living in these informal arrangements may be vulnerable.

Denefield believes that, in partnership with local councils as corporate parents, we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of CLA.

It is common for the school to work with a number of local authorities, depending on the original residence of the CLA. Each LA administers their responsibilities towards CLA and with schools differently.

Aims

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 PCLA and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential, enjoy learning and persevere in facilitating them in realising their own ambition.

Key Contacts:

Name	Telephone contact	Email
Designated Teacher Anna Williams (assisted by Nicky Wilcox, welfare manager)	0118 941 3458	aws@denefield.org.uk
Deputy designated teachers Edwin Towill Lindsay Holley	0118 941 3458 0118 941 3458	etw@denefield.org.uk hol@denefield.org.uk
Trustee for CLA	0118 941 3458	safeguardingtrustee@denefield.org.uk

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Local Authority's responsibilities are to:

- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after child, including those placed out of authority
- Secure appropriate and stable education placements, ensuring minimal disruption when care placements change
- Ensure every child has a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) that accurately reflects their educational needs and is regularly reviewed
- Appoint a Virtual School Head to oversee and ensure the authority's duties to promote educational achievement are properly discharged.
- Oversee and quality-assure the PEP process, ensuring plans are timely, robust, and ambitious
- Work with schools, social workers, and carers to secure suitable education and remove barriers to learning
- Manage Pupil Premium Plus (PP+ funding) to ensure it is used effectively to support each child's educational needs.

The Board of Trustees will:

- ensure that admission criteria prioritise CLA and PCLA, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions;
- ensure all trustees are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for CLA and PCLA
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA
- nominate a trustee who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the Board of Trustees, and ensures that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the students concerned
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years

- ensure that the school's other policies give CLA and PCLA equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - access to the curriculum and public examinations
 - additional educational support where this is needed and additional pastoral support where appropriate
 - extra-curricular activities
 - careers guidance
- support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of CLA and PCLA
- ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place in the school even if there are no CLA on roll at the time and that the Designated Teacher continues to attend training and is up to date in regards to the legal processes.

The Headteacher will:

- ensure that provision/outcomes for CLA and PCLA are specifically developed, recorded, monitored and evaluated.
- ensure that the Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA has the time and facilities to carry out this role and to attend Designated Teacher network meetings and any specific training on CLA which is required to ensure that they have the most up to date information.
- give CLA and PCLA the highest priority regarding admissions to the school even when there is oversubscription.

The Designated teacher will:

- be an advocate for any CLA and PCLA in the school and oversee support for them
- be the first point of contact regarding CLA for external agencies, including the LA virtual school
- maintain an up-to-date record of all CLA who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - status i.e., care order or Section 20 accommodation
 - type of placement i.e., foster, respite, residential
 - name and contact details of social worker
 - daily contact and numbers e.g., name of parent and carer or key worker in children's home
 - SEND status and student passport
 - child protection information when appropriate.
 - baseline information, including an assessment of preferred learning styles and all test results
 - attendance figures
 - suspensions or exclusions
 - tracking PP+ spend and its impact in conjunction with the local authority.
- Work with the local authority to ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each Child Looked After to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's care plan, and, where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. student passport, Educational Healthcare Plan (EHCP), transition plan, and any pastoral support plan.

- Ensure there is a clear and consistent plan for attendance at all PEP meetings (see Appendix 1) to ensure coherence and efficiency in planning and attaining targets.
- Ensure CLA and PCLA have access to SEND and/or HATs provision as appropriate.
- If appropriate, through the PEP review cycle, or direct contact with the Virtual School Headteacher, apply for additional funding to meet the needs of the CLA, through additional support or intervention as needed.
- Track any additional funding to ensure impact and progress of the CLA in particular 1:1 tuition for year 11 CLA and any catch-up programmes. This primarily will be done at the termly PEP.
- Ensure that an appropriate member of staff attends CLA reviews on each child and prepares a written report or uploads relevant information to PEP, as applicable, which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- Liaise with The Virtual School on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of CLA.
- Provide the relevant local authority with termly attainment data to enable the Virtual School Headteacher to have clear tracking data for all CLA.
- Ensure that if the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority, supporting as smooth a transition as is reasonably possible.
- Ensure that systems are in place to track, identify and prioritise when CLA or PCLA are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with peers.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about CLA where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that CLA and PCLA, along with all children, are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral and welfare support in school.
- Ensure that the Virtual School is informed of any suspension or exclusion and that the social worker is invited to any readmission meeting or trustees' disciplinary meetings.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of CLA and PCLA.
- To provide CPD for staff on issues pertaining to CLA and PCLA.
- Report to the Board of Trustees annually on the academic performance, attendance and suspensions or exclusions of the CLA who are on the roll of the school.
- Ensure that the school evaluates the performance data for all CLA and that it is recorded in the school's self evaluation documentation

All staff will:

- Ensure CLA and PCLA are making at least expected progress and put in place appropriate intervention to meet their needs, in liaison with the Designated Teacher and house teams to ensure accelerated progress is made.
- As with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of CLA and PCLA
- Ensure entry to examinations for CLA.
- Be familiar with the most up to date guidance on CLA and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Child Looked After is experiencing difficulty. These may be academic; pastoral; behaviour and/or attendance issues.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA will provide an annual report to the Senior Leadership Team and trustees on provision for and progress of CLA.

The progress of CLA will be monitored by subject areas at termly progress meetings.

Links to: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Appendix 1: Process for PEP meetings

1. PEP meetings will be called at least three times per year and more regularly if required.
2. The social worker and designated teacher ensure the online forms are completed before the PEP meeting.
3. Unless otherwise agreed, the child or young person should attend all or part of the meeting and should be released from lessons to do so. If the child or young person does not attend, their views will be collated and shared at the meeting by the school/social worker.
4. Following a PEP meeting, targets and actions will be circulated to any relevant teaching and support staff immediately after the PEP meeting.
5. Further details raised at PEP meetings will be circulated to other teaching and support staff on a 'need to know' basis as agreed at the meeting and, in best practice, agreed with the child or young person concerned.
6. Discuss issues relating to attendance and/or suspensions or exclusions with the Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that there is as little disruption to a child's education as possible. If considering a permanent exclusion, a discussion will be held with the Virtual School Headteacher and the Director of Children's Services.