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HONLEY HIGH SCHOOL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER POLICY

Policy Lead	Miss G Barber Associate Assistant Headteacher – Vulnerable student lead		
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Contents

Page

Context3

Aims of this Policy	4
Mission Statement	4
Roles and Responsibilities	5
Alternative Provision:	7
Exclusion:.....	8
Multi-Agency Working:	8
Funding	8

Honley High School Policy for Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PCLA)

This policy has been written in accordance with the guidance on best practice and statutory compliance issued by the DfE in February 2018. These documents outline the practice and policy needed for the best interests of those students who are looked after and who were previously looked after. Links to those documents are:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf (Designated Teacher Guidance)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf (Promoting the Education of children who are looked after or previously looked after)

1. 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;
- A previously looked-after child 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

(Taken from the DfE document referenced above outlining the role of the Designated Teacher in caring for CLA and PCLA students)

Context

Children in Local Authority care, or having been previously in such care, have immensely disadvantaged circumstances which repeated studies show can adversely affect their life chances. It is understood that CLA and PCLA children may experience:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children and tackle the barriers to learning and success from which these students may suffer.

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be children in care or 'children looked after' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives, or

- Even with parents – under supervision of Children’s Services Similarly, an ‘accommodated’ child can be living:
 - In foster care
 - In a children’s home, or
 - In a residential school

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH). In Kirklees, Janet Tolley (janet.tolley@kirklees.gov.uk) is the Virtual School Head.

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority (as the ‘corporate parent’) and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

Aims of this Policy

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PCLA) on the roll of the school, and remove barriers to their learning.

Mission Statement

At Honley High School we will champion the needs of CLA and PCLA students to ensure they have the best opportunity make rapid progress during their period in care.

We believe that school occupies a pivotal position in providing a stable environment for CLA and PCLA. We will therefore ensure that Honley High School promotes outstanding academic, social and emotional development. We will ensure staff are aware of their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA and PCLA can experience and all colleagues will therefore feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, but successfully.

We will create an environment in which children looked after (CLA) and children previously looked after (PCLA) enjoy access to excellent care and education. CLA and PCLA will be prioritised for additional support and opportunities through school led interventions, in accordance with the DfE Guidance Document for Designated Teachers - February 2018 which was referenced at the outset of this policy.

Our **Priorities** for CLA and PCLA students are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment where education is central to the support provided
- To ensure that all staff understand the specific needs of CLA and PCLA
- To narrow the gap between the progress and attainment of CLA and PCLA students and their peers, ensuring the best possible outcomes for those students
- To provide outstanding, personalised intervention (both in and out of school, as necessary)
- To use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective academic and pastoral provision to ensure maximum impact
- For all CLA to have three Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning and emotional well being on a daily basis, to provide personalised support
- For all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with a key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in the student's daily life at school
- To ensure that school systems facilitate discrete support, as appropriate
- To ensure that CLA and PCLA will be prioritised within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for
- To make CLA and PCLA students, and their foster families, feel part of the school community.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Headteacher** and **Governing Body** will:

- Promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PCLA.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After (DT) has qualified teacher status
- Ensure that adequate time is provided to the DT to fulfil this statutory role

- Ensure that the DT has access to high quality CPD to enable them to fulfil the role effectively
- Monitor the role of the DT to ensure that all CLA and PCLA students make sustained progress and that the whole school staff receives appropriate training
- Ensure that appropriate consideration of the needs of CLA and PCLA students is given through the school's Admissions Policy The **Designated Teacher** (DT) will
- Ensure that the CLA and PCLA students has access to quality first teaching
- Track the progress of CLA and PCLA students across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book scrutiny
- Ensure that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently for the maximum advantage of the CLA and PCLA student, both academically and pastorally
- Perform a coordinating role with school staff and external agencies
- Ensure effective communication with the CLA and PCLA student's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School, as well as Social Workers
- Develop expertise in the field of CLA and PCLA students
- Provide and attending training and offer advice to all school staff in how to support CLA and PCLA students generally, and specific individuals personally
- Promote a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for CLA and PCLA students
- Report regularly to the Head and Governing Body on the progress of CLA and PCLA students and staff training needs for working with this group
- prioritise CLA or PCLA students for school-based additional support, and consider them for additional support even if the young person may not meet the criteria initially provided
- ensure that CLA and PCLA students are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- complete the required conversations with young people to gain their views prior to CLA reviews or PEP meetings
- ensure that targets are followed up as agreed at the PEP meeting
- ensure that carers and care staff are engaged with the targets outlined in the PEP

- monitor the attendance of all CLA and PCLA students to ensure that attendance is significantly above the school targets for all students
- prioritise CLA and PCLA students at the point of admission, liaising with transition leaders to ensure that all CLA and PCLA students are identified
- provide additional support and planning for CLA and PCLA students at times of transition
- coordinate the work of the SENDCO and DSL to ensure that timely, appropriate and relevant support is offered for both academic progress and emotional well being
- structure activities to 'say goodbye', to provide a clear sense of the student moving on but feeling appreciated and cared for

All staff will promote improved life chances for CLA or PCLA students by:

- reading the school policy for CLA
- attending training, as appropriate
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher
- referring to the Designated Teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating a 'CLA-friendly' culture and securing sustained progress for CLA and PCLA students by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available
- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they may not meet the criteria
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress each academic year

Alternative Provision:

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision, alternative to daily attendance at school, will be:

- used to retain the CLA or PCLA student on the roll of the school, or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall **electronic personal education plan (ePEP)** for the student
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the CLA or Post-CLA
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that PEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

Exclusion:

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a CLA, in recognition of the increased risk of them quickly disengaging from the school, and potential safeguarding risk by not being in school. Prior to exclusion, the DT or DSL will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. If it is necessary to issue an exclusion, it will be for the minimum number of days possible whilst adhering with the school Behaviour Policy.

We operate in accordance with published DfE guidance such as *Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England: Statutory Guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion*, DfE September 2017.

Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will engage with colleagues from all other relevant agencies to support students and facilitate the appropriate intervention. This may include: Virtual Schools, Social Care, health, carers and others. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA and PCLA students.

Funding

- CLA and PCLA students attract PP+ funding (currently £2300 p/a). This additional funding is provided to help improve the life chances of CLA and PCLA students, and close the progress gap between them and their peers
- We will implement PP+ arrangements for all CLA and PCLA students, in accordance with the latest conditions of grant published by the Department for Education and any supplementary departmental advice it issues.

- PP+ funding will be used to maximise impact for individual CLA and PCLA students as well as the whole looked-after cohort.
- Arrangements for PP+ should be as un-bureaucratic as possible, whilst providing for strong transparency and accountability.
- It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence-based and in the best interests of the child.
- PP+ funding for previously looked after children is allocated directly to and managed by the school. We will use this funding in the best interests of individual CLA and PCLA students, as well as the interests of the cohort as a whole.
- PP+ funding IS NOT a personal budget for individual children; however, Honley High School may choose to allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The **Designated Teacher** for CLA and post CLA is:

Miss Gemma Barber

The **Designated School Governor** for CLA and post CLA is:

Mr Peter Lyster