



# FARNEY CLOSE SCHOOL

## Child Looked After Policy

<b>Date last reviewed</b>	<b>May 2024</b>
<b>Review Due</b>	<b>May 2025</b>

<b>Approval Level</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Governing Body</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Principal to Determine</b>
<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Role</b>	<b>Governor</b>
<b>Date Approved</b>	

## **Introduction**

### **Legislative Compliance**

This policy has been written as guidance for staff, parents or carers and young people with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- The Children and Young Persons Act (2008): Section 20 Education
- Roles and Responsibilities for the Designated Teacher for Children in Care (DCSF 2009)
- Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools (DCSF 2009)
- Pupil Premium information
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Promoting the education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (February 2018) Statutory Guidance
- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018

### **Aims and Objectives of this Policy**

Farney Close recognises that:

- Young People who are in the care of the Local Authority or Previously Child Looked After (PCLA) have the same rights as all young people, but may have additional needs due to attachment issues, early neglect, separation and loss, trauma and many placement moves. These barriers to learning can affect their educational outcomes and their personal, social and emotional development.
- The terms 'Children in Care' and 'Children Looked After' are inter-changeable.
- There are commonly understood reasons (Social Exclusion Unit Report:2003) why young people who are in the care of the Local Authority often fail to make expected progress in education:
  - Placement instability
  - Higher than average absence
  - Insufficient help if they fall behind
  - Unmet needs - emotional, mental, physical

We at Farney Close will do for young people in care what we do for all young people - only more so. We recognise that young people in care often have additional barriers to learning and therefore require additional support. We aim to ensure that young people in care excel, as we aim for all young people to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us as happy and secure individuals, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that their education does matter.

We will listen to what young people in care tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised.

Farney Close strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and care status of members of the school, young people should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Farney Close will specifically support young people in care by:

- Ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll
- Balancing high levels of support with educational challenge
- Ensuring that each looked-after or previously looked-after child has a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Linking each Child Looked After (CLA) or previously Child Looked After (PCLA) to a key worker they relate well to
- Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School and specialist agencies
- Encouraging and supporting young people in care to take responsibility for their learning
- Engaging young people in care in social learning outside the classroom
- Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance
- Giving integrated but low-profile support in school for each CLA or PCLA so that they are not made to feel different from other young people
- Planning for future transitions e.g. to further or higher education
- Ensuring that CLA or PCLA child-specific Pupil Premium Funding (PP) is targeted to meet their specific needs
- Recognising that they may have missed aspects of their education or social development and put in place plans to help them catch up
- Running specific raising aspirations events targeted at CLA or PCLA pupils.

Under the Children Act 1989, a Child Looked After (CLA) is a child who has been placed in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours. These children were previously referred to as Looked After Children or Child in Care depending on the local authority they are from. The pupil may also have a preferred term that they wish to be referred to. The living arrangements for CLA will vary depending on their situation and the section in which they are accommodated under. CLA at Farney Close may be living:

- in a residential children's home
- with foster carers
- with their parents
- with another family member or family friend

CLA may be under a section 20 or a section 31 of the Children's Act 1989. They may also be under an Interim Care Order which is Section 38 of the Children Act 1989.

- Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989 is where the parents agree to their child being taken into care. The parents maintain parental responsibility for their child. Some of the pupils at Farney Close may be under this section due to residing at Farney Close.
- Section 31 of the Children's Act 1989 is where a child is taken into care via a Court Order. Under this section, parental responsibility is shared between the Local Authority and the parents.
- Section 38 of the Children's Act 1989 is where a child is placed on an Interim Care Order. This allows the courts to decide where the child should live during a period of assessment. Parental responsibility is shared between the Local Authority and parents during an Interim Care Order.

The 1989 Children Act and DfEE Circular 13/94, places key responsibilities on schools and Local Authorities to address more effectively the needs of children who are Looked After in public care.

Research shows that nationally, CLA significantly underachieve compared to their peers at school. They are more likely to get excluded from school and are at higher risk of becoming "Not in Education, Employment, or Training" (NEET). Farney Close School recognises the major role that it plays in helping CLA young people to succeed and build a better future for themselves where they can be happy, healthy, safe and able to make a positive contribution to society.

Farney Close School supports the needs of CLA by:

- Promoting attendance
- Building relationships
- Promoting inclusion
- Providing stability
- Listening to the views of the child
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing exclusions
- Staff training
- Working in partnership with carers, parents, Social Workers, and other professionals

### **Admission/Induction Arrangements**

Young people in care are a priority for admission and, as such, we follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to Farney Close School or to care, carers will be given introductory information about our school's expectations and processes and the CLA will meet with the Designated Teacher for CLA, School Social Worker and the schools Referrals and Inclusion Officer. The Designated Teacher for CLA and School Social Worker, will identify any relevant issues, academic or

pastoral, and ensure the CLA is made to feel supported in our school. Consideration will be given to giving the CLA a peer mentor if this will support their progress.

On admission, records will be requested from the CLA's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the CLA, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When young people already on the school's roll enter care, Farney Close will ensure that the CLA meets with the School Social Worker as soon as possible and is fully informed of the school's procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and an initial PEP meeting must be held within 28 days.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication, to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings, will be discussed and agreed.

### **The role and responsibilities of Trustee Directors**

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 places a duty on the Directors to designate a member of staff (the designated teacher) as having responsibility to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children and previously Children Looked After To this effect, the Directors should:

- Ensure that the necessary provision is being made for any pupil who is a Looked After Child or previously Looked After Child.
- Ensure that the designated teachers are given the appropriate level of support and has the opportunity to keep up to date with relevant training
- Ensure the designated teacher disseminates relevant training and provides support for all members of staff that will influence teaching and learning for Looked After Children and previously Children Looked After.
- The Directors in partnership with the school's Principal are responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the Designated Teacher.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the Trust's policy for LAC and previously CLA.

There is a named governor responsible for overseeing the CLA children and young people. This Governor will report to The Board on an annual basis (unless it will be easy to identify individual children whereby work on behalf of all vulnerable groups may be more appropriate):

Areas that may be reported:

- A comparison of test scores for CLA and PCLA as a discrete group, compared with the attainment and progress of other pupils;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared with other pupils;
- The level of fixed-term / permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that pupils who are CLA or PCLA have equal access to:

- The national curriculum;
- Public examinations;
- Careers guidance.

### **Roles and responsibilities of the Principal**

- Identify a Child Looked After Coordinator, whose role is set out below. It is essential that the Principle identify another person for this role if the Child Looked After Coordinator were to leave their employment or be on leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the attendance, admission, exclusions and progress of CLA and that action is taken where necessary.
- Ensure all staff receive regular training and are aware of this policy and how best to support the pupils who are CLA.

### **Roles and responsibilities of the Child Looked After Coordinator**

The designated coordinator for CLA is the School Social Worker. In their absence, a member of the safeguarding team will be allocated to this area. Due to the School Social Worker not being a qualified teacher there is also a designated teacher. The designated teacher is the school SENCo.

The role and responsibilities of the CLA Coordinator are:

- To be an advocate for the CLA.
- Ensure that all CLA have an allocated link worker and a member of staff that they feel they can talk to (this may be the same person).
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed every term. The pupil, their carer, social worker and other professionals should attend these meetings. If appropriate the pupil's parents should also be invited to attend. The designated teacher should attend or provide feedback for these meetings.
- Ensure that all Farney Close paperwork for PEPs are completed prior to the PEP meeting.
- Ensure that the local authority paperwork is completed in a timely manner after the PEP.
- Chair the CLA's annual review of their EHCP.
- Track the progress, both educationally and socially, and identify further support where necessary.
- Coordinate any support that takes place within school.

- Ensure confidentiality is maintained for the pupil and only share information on a need to know basis. Gain permission within PEP and CLA meetings to share information if necessary.
- Promote attendance. If attendance becomes a problem work alongside the Referrals and Inclusion officer to support re-engagement in school. Complete a home visit or organise for another member of staff to complete a home visit.
- Act as an advisor to the members of staff and the governors. Give guidance on the needs of CLA.
- Set up additional meetings in a timely manner if the pupil is experiencing difficulties within school or if they are facing exclusion.
- Communicate effectively with carers, parents, social workers and other external agencies. Ensure they are aware of any problems but also achievements that the young person is experiencing.
- Support the pupil through transitions they are experiencing such as starting or leaving school.
- Work alongside the Vice-Principle to ensure that any pupil premium the school receives for CLA is used to promote achievement for the pupil.

### **Roles and responsibility of all staff**

- Maintain confidentiality with regard to the CLA and support them with sensitivity.
- Respond in a timely manner to any request of information or paperwork from the Looked After Child Coordinator.
- Report any problems or concerns regarding a CLA to the CLA Coordinator.
- Attend PEP and CLA meetings if asked to do so by the CLA Coordinator.
- Understand the challenges CLA face.
- Be aware that CLA can often be the targets of bullying and act to prevent this happening.

### **Personal Education Plans**

All CLA children must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their own social worker will take the lead in developing. The PEP is a record of the child's education and forms part of the overall Care Plan. It provides a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision to ensure academic progress. The social worker, parents, carers and the child may be invited to the PEP meeting to ensure the views of all stakeholders are considered. The school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this.

Issues that may be discussed in the PEP:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses
- include the child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective
- interests, both in and out of school
- developmental and educational and pastoral needs

- future plans, and how these can be supported
- issues arising for the child
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

The PEP will set clear objectives or targets which relate to academic achievement as well as out of school activities and wherever necessary behavioural targets.

If a child or young person moves school, the PEP should be forwarded, as a matter of urgency, to the new school when known.

In relation to previously CLA pupils, although they no longer required a PEP, the designated teacher should continue to consider their educational needs. The CLA Coordinator and designated teacher should maintain links with VSHs who must make advice and information available, in order to promote the educational achievement of this group of previously looked-after children.

### **Funding**

CLA or previously CLA children and young people are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers.

Farney Close School is committed to ensuring effective use of dedicated funding, where available, for all eligible Children Looked After on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

### **Partnership Working**

Farney Close School values partnership working, and in order to secure the best possible outcomes for Children Looked After, viewing it as essential that we work with parents/carers, social workers, the Virtual School and other external partners to ensure we are providing the best possible life chances for our Children Looked After.

### **Leaving Arrangements**

When a CLA leaves Farney Close School we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school or FE/HE institution if appropriate. Where possible, if a destination is known in advance, the future institution will be invited to the final PEP to confirm transition arrangements. All Year 11 Children Looked After will be asked if they would like their preferred post-16 provider to be invited to their PEP as required by the LA guidance.