

Children Looked After (CLA) Policy



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1.0 Introduction

In this policy, EDA will be used to cover the Emil Dale Academy studios and eligible students.

Eligible students are children who are either 16 or 17 who have been looked after by a local authority for a period of 13 weeks or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after they reached 14 and ended after they reached 16, and are enrolled on the Sixth Form course.

2.0 Location of policy

This policy is available to access on EDA's website.

3.0 Policy Objective

This policy aims to implement the guidance for all children with a social worker.

That is:

- a) the statutory guidance to promote the educational achievement and welfare of all Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PLA) on the roll of our school
- b) to outline how EDA will implement the non-statutory guidance that is the 'duty to promote the education of children with a social worker in the last 6 years'.

Name of the Designated Teacher at Knights Templar for CLA and PLA

Mrs Lucy Moore

Name of the Designated School Governor at Knights Templar for CLA and PLA

Mrs Pauling Poole

Name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Knights Templar with responsibility for children with a Social Worker

Mrs Katie Curtis

Name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead at EDA

Miss Victoria Hammond

At EDA we will ensure that children looked after (CLA) and children previously looked after (PLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions to achieve as well as possible, in accordance with the [DfE guidance](#).

4.0 Intention

EDA acknowledge and understand the intention of the [revised guidance issued in June 2022](#), by the DfE to local authorities, that extends the role of the Virtual School Head to use strategic influence with schools and social care to improve the educational outcomes for all children known to a social worker. We will extend the priority for additional support to this group as part of our implementation of the New Duty.

We understand that this new guidance includes all children who are most vulnerable and educationally disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and in care or previously in care. We also understand that this guidance is essential in the drive to ensure that those who have lost the most from the pandemic can recover and flourish as set out in the research within the Deaton Review, the Nuffield Foundation, 2022.

We recognise that EDA plays a vital role in providing a supportive and stable base for all children known to a social worker including CLA, and in promoting their academic, social, and emotional development. We understand the need for annual whole school staff and freelancer training on trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice in the school, so that all adults, both non-teaching and teaching, fully understand and are sensitive to the barriers to learning that children can experience.

We want to develop an ethos within EDA for all children and young people to feel supported and safe and that they belong through the relationships they make with staff, freelancers and pupils. We understand the need to work in a 'relationship-based' way so that all children feel valued, nurtured and a part of our community, particularly those who have experienced a very poor early start in life.

Our aim is to establish a culture within EDA that improves the well-being of staff, freelancers and pupils through an informed understanding of the inter-relationship between learning, well-being and safeguarding.

We agree with the emerging views that well-being is central to a young person's success in education and understand that it is not possible to separate well-being and learning. Our commitment is to provide all children and young people on our roll with a breadth of learning experiences that will champion the needs of all children to ensure they make rapid educational and social progress throughout their education journey at EDA.

We will use our policies and practice to create a *'calm, safe and supportive environment where children and young people want to attend and where they can learn and thrive'*.

We will do this in recognition of the wider context where; *'The behaviour policy is the starting point for laying out our vision and is one of the important ways this school culture is communicated to pupils, staff, and parents and carers'*. **DfE: Behaviour in schools Advice for headteachers and school staff September 2022.** See [here](#) for new guidance.

We know that it is likely that children have experienced loss and educational damage as a result of the pandemic and as an educational institution, we see each academic year as an opportunity to develop our EDA staff and freelancers to engage in positive relational practice to enable all to achieve the best possible outcomes and standards.

We understand that positive behaviour management is completely influenced by the relationships we foster between all adults and children who are part of EDA, and that learning is taught as well as 'caught'.

EDA's culture and values are manifested through the behaviour of all members of the school community - teachers, staff, visiting freelancers and pupils. Our expectation is everyone within EDA will interact with respect, kindness, and integrity.

4.1 Equality and Diversity

The implementation of this Policy requires a reflection on those learners who have many overlapping experiences: discrimination because of a protective characteristic, SEND, poverty, other adverse childhood experiences. Supporting these learners to achieve will raise achievement for all. The expectation is that all learners receive a high-quality, ambitious education; that is inclusive of all learners. All schools and other education providers must meet their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010. All protected characteristics are supported to enable Hertfordshire schools to provide opportunity for all.

We acknowledge that we should train all staff and freelancers to reflect on their professional responses to children and to prevent unconscious bias from affecting aspiration.

5.0 Impact

- a) A safe and secure environment is provided where educational progress and stability is always central to the planning.
- b) All adults are equipped with the understanding of the impact that the experience of trauma and neglect can have on the way children form relationships and learn.
- c) Staff and freelancers feel confident to work within a relational approach to behaviour management or regulation strategies that take into consideration what has been learnt from recent research on the effect of trauma on the brain and the potential long-term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- d) The gap between the attainment of children with a social worker and their peers is narrowed, accelerated and rapid progress is made.
- e) School-based interventions are accessed, even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention see guidance here and to use any allocated funding ensure effective impact.
- f) All CLA to have at least termly Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings each academic year and for the joint planning and quality first teaching to have measurable impact on each child's learning on a daily basis (see guidance [here](#)).
- g) All adults provide sensitive, child-led support, adopting a relationship-based approach and there will be at least one key adult with whom the child or young person has a trusted relationship and who will act as an advocate for them and take a special interest in their progress in all EDA activities.
- h) EDA systems facilitate nurturing support, that includes a strong relationship between EDA staff, parents or carers and children with a social worker on roll.
- i) Children with a social worker are positively identified within EDA procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for (see guidance [here](#)).
- j) The Sixth Form Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour, and it is understood that all behaviour is communication and staff/freelancers respond with compassion and care. Sanctions that shame and ostracise children from their peers, EDA, community or family are avoided. An inclusive culture and positive school ethos is created for every student.
- k) All children with a social worker and their families feel part of the EDA community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged into this school community (see guidance [here](#)).

6.0 Statutory Educational Planning for all Children Looked After

6.1 Statutory Personal Education Plans (ePEP)

EDA will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer, and other relevant professionals. In any one school year there will be at least 3 PEP meetings for each CLA.

6.2 Roles and Responsibilities: Education planning for all children with a Social Worker

The Principal, Knights Templar, and the Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for all children through high quality learning and teaching and a drive to best possible outcomes for each and every child.

Children known to a social worker, as shown in the [Government's Children in Need review \(2019\)](#) evidenced for the first time, achieve significantly less well than others at all stages of education and that poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends.

6.2.1 The Principal and Knights Templar

- a) will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After at the Knights Templar School has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role and have at least 2 days per year training to remain fully informed.
- b) will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and PLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receive appropriate training.
- c) will also ensure that there is an expectation of significant communication, joint planning, and training with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school so that there is a full and informed response to understanding the needs of children with a Social Worker within the school and a collaborative approach with Social Care.
- d) will complete both sections of the Report to Governors (formerly CLASEF), to share their plan for improvement and development in school for disadvantaged children and also to inform the Hertfordshire Virtual School of the school's developing policy and practice, and to account for the efficient and effective spend of any allocated funding for CLA and to inform the school Governing Body in an annual report.

6.2.2 Designated Teachers for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After at Knights Templar is a Statutory Post and in 2023-24

Mrs Lucy Moore

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After at EDA

Ms Fran Gowar

Ms Fran Gowar will work with Victoria Hammond (EDA's Principal) and Knights Templar to promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA by:

- a) ensuring that the CLA or PLA has access to quality first teaching.
- b) tracking the progress of CLA and PLA across the curriculum using data and teacher reports.
- c) ensuring that any allocated funding is used effectively and efficiently.

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- d) performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies.
- e) ensuring effective communication with Knights Templar.
- f) developing expertise in the field of CLA, including attachment theory and trauma-informed practice.
- g) delivering the Virtual School training: 'An introduction to Attachment-Aware and Trauma Informed Practice' to the whole school staff and necessary freelancers.
- h) providing and attending training and offering advice to EDA staff and necessary freelancers.
- i) promoting a school culture which is supportive, relationship-based and has high expectations for CLA and PLA.
- j) regularly reporting to the Principal and Knights Templar on the attainment of CLA and PLA and EDA resource and staff/freelancer training needs for working with this group.
- k) working alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead to support and promote the education of children with a Social Worker on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.
- l) prioritising CLA for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria (see guidance [here](#)).
- m) ensuring that CLA and PLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within EDA because of their care status.

6.2.3 EDA Staff and Freelancers

All EDA staff and necessary freelancers will promote improved educational life chances for all Children with a Social Worker by:

- a) attending relevant training.
- b) providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher.
- c) referring to the Designated Teacher for advice.
- d) developing skills to be able to work in a relational way.
- e) promoting a relational culture to help fully re-engage children as post-pandemic learners to make rapid progress through access to any additional school-based support available and from quality first teaching.
- f) be aware of the existence of potential unconscious bias about children with a social worker and will mitigate against such a situation through careful reflection and ensuring that all decisions about these children are justifiable, equitable and fair.

6.2.4 Attendance

EDA attendance procedures will reflect the specific needs of all children with a Social Worker to ensure that they have good attendance and punctuality. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with EDA, the local authority and other local partners.

Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, the school will contact the social worker, and other professionals, promptly.

6.2.5 Admissions/Transitions

EDA procedures to support CLA and PLA during admission and transition are enshrined in the statutory codes of practice for admission:

- a) prioritising CLA and PLA at the point of admission,

However, it is recommended that for all children known to a social worker who are in the process of admission into EDA or transitioning to EDA from elsewhere:

- b) there is a swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits.
- c) early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy.
- d) additional support and planning at times of transition.
- e) structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss.

6.2.6 Additional Educational Needs

All staff and necessary freelancers will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for all Children with a Social Worker with additional educational needs by:

- a) having high expectations.
- b) ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria (see guidance [here](#)).
- c) using any allocated funding strategically.

Non-eligible pupils

- d) Schools (including EDA) can spend any allocated funding on pupils who do not meet eligibility criteria but need extra support.

Examples

Schools (including EDA) can use any allocated funding to support other pupils, for example if they:

- a) Are in contact with a social worker.
- b) Used to be in contact with a social worker.
- c) Are acting as a carer.
- d) Ensure that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken has Head of Department over-sight.
- e) Ensure that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the targets set as agreed in the termly Virtual School visits to Knights Templar, ePEP and Knights Templar's Annual Report to Governors.

6.2.7 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

All staff and necessary freelancers will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for all Children with a Social Worker who have special educational needs and disabilities by ensuring:

- a) that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic.
- b) that they are accessing EDA support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision.
- c) that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with EDA's Sixth Form Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
- d) that any work undertaken has Head of Department over-sight.
- e) **that with the school SENCO, the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained.**

6.2.8 Safeguarding

EDA staff and necessary freelancers will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on any child with a Social Worker by: familiarising themselves with EDA's Sixth Form Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and the current KCSIE guidance [DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

If a safeguarding concern arises, EDA staff and freelancers are required to act according to the procedures set out in EDA's Sixth Form Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

6.2.9 Suspensions and Exclusions

- a) We understand that behaviour management is completely influenced by the relationships we foster between all adults and children who are part of EDA, and that learning about behaviour regulation is taught as well as 'caught'.
- b) We understand that the purpose of our Sixth Form Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy is to provide all adults and children in our school with a safe and inclusive learning environment in which everybody is respected.
- c) We will make every effort to avoid excluding a child looked after, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will always discuss the rationale for exclusion with Knights Templar, who in turn will discuss with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School.
- d) We will explore alternative positive options which prioritise the young person's learning.
- e) We will only consider Permanent Exclusion from EDA as the last possible resort for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After, recognising that entire living arrangements could be affected as a result.
- f) Suspension must be for as short a period as possible with the aim of improving outcomes for the child or young person. The time during and after the suspension period will be used constructively to resolve the situation and ensure positive and appropriate support is in place for all.
- g) We will always contact The Knights Templar School for support to find an effective solution which best meets the needs of the child looked after.
- h) We understand that 'where a looked-after child (CLA) is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher (DT) should contact the local authority's VSH as soon as possible to discuss support for the individual child to reduce harm to the child's future education and to plan the best way to resolve the situation'.
- i) We will use the following methods to avoid suspending or excluding a child known to a Social Worker:
 - i. Hold restorative meetings;
 - ii. Hold restorative meetings;
 - iii. Conduct anxiety mapping tasks to identify any triggers;
 - iv. Adapting timetables where required;
 - v. Implement praise and reward where possible;
 - vi. Implementing alternative sanctions before internally or externally suspending.

We understand that the Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty can, in principle, apply both to the suspensions and permanent exclusions process and to the disciplinary sanctions imposed. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, governing boards of relevant settings must use their 'best endeavours' to ensure the appropriate special educational provision is made for pupils with SEN, which will include any support in relation to behaviour management that they need because of their SEN. Our school procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of children with a Social Worker with special educational needs. (Regulation 4(1)(c) of the Equalities Act 2010 which means that a head teacher could only lawfully exclude a child for a reason relating to their disability, even a disability that results in the child having a tendency to challenging behaviour).

Version Number	Date of Issue	Review Date	Author	Changes Made/ detail
01	29 th November 22	July 2023	Eden Tinsey	First issue
02	4 th August 23	July 2024	Eden Tinsey	Annual policy review
03	21 st March 24	March 2025	Eden Tinsey	Policy rewrite in line with Knights Templar updates