The Chalfonts Community College

Success is an Attitude!

Children Looked After & Previously Looked After Children Policy

2026 - 2027

Last Reviewed on:	September 2026
New Review due:	September 2027

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Statement of Intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PCLA) are of the utmost importance. Children who are looked after require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

At The Chalfonts Community College (CCC) we will create an environment where Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PCLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the 'DfE Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children' 28th February 2018.

Designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for CLA and PCLA students and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA and PCLA experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise.

Our school community aims to champion the needs of CLA and PCLA to ensure they make rapid progress.

CCC endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our students. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage students to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that students enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum, which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for CLA and PCLA students realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help students develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

We are aware that the OFSTED inspection framework will consider the provisions that we, as a whole school, have put in place to support looked after and previously looked after children. We understand that a judgement will be made within the OFSTED framework in terms of how far this school is able to support looked after young people.

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA

Mrs Morag Wall – Senior Assistant Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and PCLA

Mr Stuart Dennis (Chair of Governors)

1. Legal Framework

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

- Children Act 2004
- 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) 'https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a9015d4e5274a5e67567fbe/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf
- DfE (2018) 'The Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children
- DfE (2023) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE [2025] 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing In Education
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy
- Home School Agreement

- SEND Policy

2. Definitions

2.1. "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 2004.
- 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, where 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.

2.2. "Children Previously Looked After (PCLA)" are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or 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).

Acronym	Long Form	Definition
CLA	Children Looked After	Children who have been placed in local authority care or where children's services have looked after children for more than a period of 24 hours
DSL	Designated safeguarding lead	DSL - A member of the senior leadership team who has the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school.

DT	Designated Teacher	Designated Teacher is a member of staff who has the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered pupils at the school
LA	Local authority	A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education
PCLA	Previously Children Looked After	Children who were previously in local authority care or were looked after by children's services for more than a period of 24 hours. PCLA are also known as care leavers.
PP+	Pupil Premium Plus	Pupil premium is funding to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in state-funded schools in England.
SENCO	Special educational needs coordinator	A statutory role within all schools maintaining oversight and coordinating the implementation of the school's special educational needs policy and provision of education to students with special educational needs.
SEND	Special educational needs and Disabilities	A student is assessed to have SEND if they have a learning problem or disability that makes it more difficult for them to learn than most students their age.
SLT	Senior leadership team	Staff members who have been delegated leadership responsibilities in a school

VSH.	Virtual school head	Virtual school heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority they work for, and all children who currently have, or previously had, a social worker

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for CLA and PCLA.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the DT for CLA and PCLA has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child
- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep CLA and PCLA safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst CLA and PCLA.
- Ensuring CLA and PCLA have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the reports produced by the DT presented at the SLA governing body committee to evaluate the progress of CLA in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the school regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

3.2. The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.

- 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 DT understand the support available to CLA and PCLA.
- Working with the school to ensure all CLA in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for CLA.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PCLA as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of student premium plus (PP+) for CLA.
- 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 Principal and DT if they have a student on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure social workers, schools, DT, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a student's Personal Education Plan (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 is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of CLA through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

3.3. The Principal is responsible for:

- Appointing the DT for CLA and PCLA.
- Allowing the DT the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing body annually on the following: The number of CLA and PCLA in the school
    - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other student groups
    - The attendance of CLA and PCLA, compared to other student groups. The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other student groups
    - Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA is a key priority.

- Ensuring PP+ for CLA is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA.

3.4. The Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA is responsible for:

- Becoming the central point of contact at this school for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the individual looked after children we have on roll.
- Taking the lead role in the professional assessment and preparation of the educational targets and subsequent reviews to be recorded into the relevant sections of the child's PEP. The PEP should be established within twenty school working days for any looked after child starting on roll. This to include the gradual addition and updating of further information over time e.g. attendance, attainment and progress results. 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 PCLA.
- Promoting the educational achievement of CLA and PCLA at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Attend relevant update training and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding looked after children.
- Ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Establish good working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews.
- Provide support and sanctuary to help settle a looked after child into the school, and at other times; ensure that the looked after child feels safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring CLA are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for CLA
- Ensuring that CLA are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all student needs are met.

- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding CLA and PCLA due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL (if the DT is not already the DSL) as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Ensure the transfer of records if a looked after child moves school.
- Provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required.
- Seek and prioritise meetings with, and referrals to, appropriate external agencies in situations that require external support.
- Working with the Principal to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all CLA and PCLA.

The DT will monitor and evaluate the impact of our school provision, teaching and learning and support for looked after and previously looked after children. The annual reporting cycle informs on the following key aspects of provision:

- The number of looked after children and previously looked after children on roll.
- Attendance statistics for any authorised and unauthorised absence.
- The frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion.
- How they are performing in core subjects, their progress and any value-added measure when compared against initial baseline assessment;
- The frequency of them taking part in extra-curricular activities.
- The attainment relative to the targets set in core and foundation subjects.
- The provision arrangements for additional support identified to include 1:1 tuition at school and any externally added booster work provided in the care home.
- The quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP

3.5. The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of CLA's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding CLA and PCLA as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.

- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

At CCC, the DSL is also the DT for looked after children. This group is extremely vulnerable, the most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and the school is aware of the need to monitor the welfare and ensure the support of children in this category.

The DSL has details of the legal status of each individual looked after child's care arrangements and what the contact arrangements are with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will also know the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.

3.6. The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CLA and PCLA.
- Liaising with the class teacher, Designated Teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PCLA.

3.7. Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of CLA and PCLA and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards CLA and PCLA.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding CLA and PCLA due to their increased vulnerability to harm and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of CLA and PCLA.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- Understand how important it is to see CLA and PCLA as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status
- Appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child

- Understanding for PCLA, the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education and be a contact for parents/carers or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

4. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

4.1. All CLA must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

4.2. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a student to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.

4.3. The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a PEP meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals.

4.4. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

4.5. The school with other professionals (Social Worker, and Virtual School Officer (VSO) and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.

4.6. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the DT and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

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

- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- 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 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.

- Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the student.

5. Working with Agencies and the VSH

5.1. The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the CLA social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

5.2. The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of CLA with their statutory care review.

5.3. The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions, or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard CLA and PCLA.

5.4. 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.

5.5. The DT for CLA and PCLA will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.

5.6. Through the DT, the school will work with the VSH, 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.

5.7. The DT will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can onal attainment and progress.

5.8. PP+ for PCLA will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school.

5.9. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of CLA, or PCLA, and according to their needs.

5.10. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

5.11. The DT will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding CLA who are absent without authorisation.

5.12. The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CLA and PCLA.

6. Training

6.1. The DT and other school staff involved in the education of CLA and PCLA should have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

School admissions arrangements

- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting students to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

All training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep CLA and PCLA safe.

7. Safeguarding

7.1. The school recognises that many CLA or PCLA have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave students vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

7.2. All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst CLA and PCLA as soon as possible.

7.3. Where a CLA or PCLA has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risk

7.4. The Principal will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of CLA and PCLA can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

7.5. Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over CLA or PCLA in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

7.6. Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the DT if they believe a CLA or PCLA is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on students who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8. Student Mental Health

8.1. CLA and PCLA are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. DT will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

8.2. The DT will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CLA and PCLA, and know how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

8.3. The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst CLA and CLA may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the DT will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with CLA or PCLA, are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these students.

8.4. A strengths and difficulties questionnaire may well be used on a termly and or annual basis (depending upon which LA the Young Person is with) to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about CLA and PCLA's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

8.5. The school's Designated Senior Mental Health Lead will promote the wellbeing and mental health of CLAs and PCLA, and will always either be a member of, or be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO or DSL.

9. Exclusions

9.1. Past experiences of CLA and PCLA will be considered when designing and implementing the school's behaviour for learning policy.

9.2. The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any CLA. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

9.3. Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

9.4. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a CLA to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

9.5. Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the student's education in the event of exclusion.

9.6. The school will inform parents/carers that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

9.7. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour policy or where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

10. Students with SEND

10.1. Support for CLA with SEND, who do not need an EHCP, will be covered as part of the student's PEP and care plan reviews.

10.2. The SENCO, class teacher, DT and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.

10.3. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on the proposed SEND provision for PCLA.

10.4. The DT and the SENCO will ensure that CLA and PCLA with SEND are supported in line with the SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting students with SEND may lack applicability for CLA, e.g. where CLA are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

11. Information Sharing

11.1. Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CLA and PCLA are understood and met.

11.2. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on CLA and PCLA and how data will remain secure.
- How students and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual students is passed between authorities, departments and the school when students move.

12. Monitoring and Review

12.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the DT and the Principal.

History

Date	Issue	Status	Comments
October 2023	1	New	Rewritten Policy
January 2024	2	Update	Legal Framework / Date Changes
July 2024	3	Update Addition	Update grammar and KCSIE 2024 Definitions table
October 2025	4	Update	Date change, New Format Change of Abbreviation to CLA
September 2026	5	Update	Date change and policy name change from Child Looked After and Previous Looked After Child Policy to Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy