

## PROMOTING THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) AND PREVIOUSLY CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (POST-CLA) POLICY

### LAC and Post LAC Policy

September 2025

Mrs P Jackson

Version 5

### School Aims

Here at *The Gates*, we believe we have a crucial role in helping to raise the educational standards of our most vulnerable children. As a school, we recognise that Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Children Looked After (Post-CLA) are known to significantly underachieve, have poorer educational outcomes, and remain at greater risk of educational and social exclusion compared with children who do not meet this criterion.

Improving life chances through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation of each individual CLA child is of paramount importance to the staff at *The Gates* and is something that, as a school, we believe we do well. We believe it is our duty to support and guide our Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After, and we take this responsibility seriously.

Working in partnership with social workers, the Virtual School team, carers and families, our school understands the importance of providing a source of consistency and familiarity for children who may have been subject to abuse and/or neglect. We will ensure that discretion is used when addressing a child's care status and that there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding any classwork related to family.

Our school is an environment in which children can feel safe, be themselves, and receive emotional and academic support to enable them to reach their full potential. Raising levels of achievement has been clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of our children, and we understand that our school plays a fundamental role in this.

As a school, we will ensure that all our CLA and Previously CLA pupils have the same opportunities to participate fully in the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and to enjoy the school experience in line with corporate parenting principles.

All staff at *The Gates* will be positive role models for our Children Looked After. We know our pupils will be stretched and challenged to achieve their fullest possible academic potential.

### Definition

#### Child Looked After (CLA):

The term *looked after* was introduced by the **Children Act 1989**. This refers to a child who is either:

- *Accommodated by the Local Authority (LA)* — meaning the LA provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility; or

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- *Subject to a Care Order* — meaning that a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the LA in order to protect and promote a child's welfare.

Children in both instances may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with biological relatives, or with biological parents on a part- or full-time basis.

### **Previously Child Looked After (Post-CLA):**

This is any child who was previously under the care of the Local Authority under the criteria stated above.

### **Legal Framework**

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) require schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of Children Looked After.

From **1 September 2009**, the Governing Bodies of all maintained schools are required, under the **Children and Young Persons Act 2008**, to appoint a **Designated Teacher (DT)** to promote the educational achievement of CLA who are on the school roll.

### **Schools must:**

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education for all Children Looked After.
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all Children Looked After.
- Prioritise reducing the number of exclusions and truancies for all Children Looked After.
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher to advocate for the rights of Children Looked After.
- Develop systems of communication and clear protocols.
- Promote the attendance of all Children Looked After.

### **The Role of the CLA Governor**

The named Governor (**Sarah Foster**) will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher (**Sean Doherty**) and the Designated Teacher (**Paula Jackson**) as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all CLA have equal access to learning opportunities in line with their peers.

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- The school has a coherent policy for Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After.
- The Designated Teacher has received appropriate training.
- Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After have equal access to all areas of the curriculum.
- The Governing Body receives a CLA report every half term.

### **The Role of the Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher (**Sean Doherty**) is ultimately responsible for all Children Looked After in the school and will meet regularly with the appointed Designated Teacher to ensure that the Children Looked After are attending, happy, and achieving at school.

In addition, the Head Teacher will:

- Appoint the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training.
- Oversee the development of the policy on Children Looked After.
- Report to the Governing Body on an annual basis.

### **The Role of the Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher at *The Gates Primary School* is **Paula Jackson (SENCO)**, line managed by **Sean Doherty (Head Teacher)**.

DfE Guidance (2018) states:

“The most effective Designated Teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every child looked after and previously child looked after on the school’s roll. This involves working with Virtual School Heads (VSHs) to promote the education of children looked after and previously children looked after and promoting a whole-school culture where the personalised learning needs of every such child matter, and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.”

The DT will form strong bonds with all Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After at the school so that they feel they have an adult they can talk to and be honest with. Together, they can decide what information is shared with other staff and negotiate who should be aware of their care status.

The DT will maintain and respect confidentiality, ensuring that information is shared strictly on a ‘need to know’ basis.

The DT will work with all relevant adults to ensure each child’s school experience is positive, including: the child, teachers, teaching assistants, social workers, carers, and parents (when appropriate).

The DT will:

- Attend regular training and cascade key information to staff as appropriate.
- Review school policies regularly in light of new guidance, publications or legislation.
- Set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all Children Looked After through CLA reports.
- Share half-termly reports with the Head Teacher and CLA Governor, including:
  - The number of CLA pupils in school
  - Attendance data
  - Exclusion data
  - Attainment levels
  - Care status of each child

The DT will also:

- Build positive home-school relationships with carers and parents through regular dialogue.
- Act as a confidant for each Child Looked After, providing advice and support on academic or pastoral issues.
- Liaise with the SENCO and/or outside agencies (including the Education of Children Looked After Service) where additional support is needed.
- Attend all Child Looked After Reviews to share school progress and ensure records are up to date.
- Ensure each Child Looked After has a **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** that is current and fit for purpose.

### **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

It is a legal requirement for each CLA child to have a Pupil Education Plan, reviewed every six months. Each child at *The Gates Primary School* will have a PEP that is fit for purpose.

The DT will ensure:

- All PEP reviews are up to date.
- Achievable and effective educational targets are set for each child.
- All relevant parties (social workers, parents/carers, foster carers, and where appropriate, siblings) are invited to reviews.

Each review will assess what is working well and what further support may be required.

### **Admissions**

Regulations made under the **School Standards and Framework Act (1998)** require schools to give CLA children the highest priority in their admissions arrangements.

All Children Looked After are welcome at *The Gates*. Applications are handled promptly by the Business Manager to minimise disruption to education.

New CLA pupils will meet with the Designated Teacher and class teacher to discuss their hopes, expectations and concerns. The school will make the child feel as comfortable as possible by introducing them to their class.

Conversations will take place with the child's carer and social worker to ensure school staff understand the child's history and needs. Class support will be offered, and the child will be made aware of whom they can talk to for help or reassurance.

If necessary, additional support will be provided by the appropriate adult (DT, SENCO or class teacher).

At *The Gates*, we foster a supportive and nurturing environment, delivered not only by staff but also by pupils. To ease transition, we will buddy new pupils with a caring and supportive partner and offer a graduated transition into school. We hold high standards for our CLA pupils and encourage each of them to adopt these standards for themselves by cultivating a *Growth Mindset*.

### **Complaints**

The Gates Primary School is committed to keeping our children safe.

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about this provision or policy, they should first raise it with the Designated Teacher (**Paula Jackson**), who will attempt to resolve the issue.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head Teacher (**Sean Doherty**). The Head Teacher will investigate and respond within 10 working days.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage will be addressed through a meeting to assess the impact of the complaint on the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor (**Sarah Foster**) and any relevant outside agencies. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head Teacher's response.

## Contact Details

**Designated Teacher:** Paula Jackson

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📞 01942 634734

**Head Teacher:** Sean Doherty

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📞 01942 634734

**CLA Governor:** Sarah Foster

✉ office@thegates.bolton.sch.uk

## Monitoring

Paula Jackson is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy and for making decisions in line with school policy.

GOVERNOR SUBCOMMITTEE	VERSION	DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION	Member of staff
	4	November	Paula Jackson