



Woolgrove School Policy

CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER:

Children Looked After, Previously
Looked After, on a Child in Need
or Child Protection Plan

Taken from Herts. Model Policy by: Felicity Evans ISSUE 12

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MODEL SCHOOL POLICY FOR CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER: Children Looked After, Previously Looked After, on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan

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A Model School Policy for the Education of all Children with a Social Worker to include:



- **Looked After (CLA)**
- **Previously Looked After Children (PLA)**
- **Children on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan (CSW)**

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Policy Objective

To implement the guidance for all children with a social worker.

That is:

- 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 this school.
- to outline how this school 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. (To be made statutory when Parliamentary time allows.)

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLA

Richard Pritchard

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and PLA

Karen Porter

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

Richard Pritchard

At **Woolgrove** School 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](#).

Intention

As a school, we 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, and that it 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 our school 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 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 these children experience.

We want to develop an ethos within the school so that all children and young people feel supported and safe and that they belong through the relationships they make with staff 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 school community, particularly those who have experienced a very poor early start in life.

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

We agree with the emerging views on wellbeing being central to a young person's success in education and understand that it is not possible to separate wellbeing 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 in this school.

We will use our school 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*'. 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 a school, we see the new academic year as an opportunity to develop our school staff to engage in relational practice to achieve best possible outcomes and standards.

The Virtual School Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed [Toolkit](#) training will support a greater understanding of diversity and equality and will enable all staff to better understand the behaviours of all children who experienced the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are a Herts. Steps School and all of our staff recognise the impact of attachment, trauma and ACES on the wellbeing and development of pupils. Promoting an inclusive environment is key to the well-being of all pupils, as is a commitment to deepening pupils' understanding of "democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance" (Ofsted 2019).

Our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy is for staff and children alike. We understand that behaviour management is completely influenced by the relationships we foster between all adults and children who are part of this school, and that learning is taught as well as 'caught'.

Our school's culture and values are manifested through the behaviour of all its members, both teachers, ancillary staff and pupils and everyone within the school interacts with respect, kindness, and integrity.

Equality and Diversity statement for this Policy:

The implementation of this Policy requires a reflection on those vulnerable learners who have many overlapping needs: race, SEND, poverty etc. 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 so Hertfordshire schools provide opportunity for all. See [here](#) for the Hertfordshire strategy.

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

Impact

This section sets out the expected impact to be achieved through the implementation of the policy in school.

- A safe and secure environment is provided where educational progress and stability is always central to the planning
- 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.
- Staff 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 ACEs.
- The gap between the attainment of children with a social worker and their peers is narrowed, **accelerated** and **rapid** progress is made.
- School-based interventions are accessed, even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention see guidance [here](#) and to use the allocated Pupil Premium *Plus* (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- 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](#)).
- 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 school activities.

- School systems facilitate discrete support, that includes a strong relationship between school staff, parents or carers and children with a social worker on roll.
- Children with a social worker are positively identified within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for (see guidance [here](#)).
- The Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour, and it is understood that not all behaviour is a matter of choice. Sanctions that shame and ostracise children from their peers, school, community or family are avoided. An inclusive culture and positive school ethos is created for every pupil.
- All children with a social worker and their families feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged into this school community (see guidance [here](#))
- Links to other relevant school policies that reference CLA and PLA or Children with a Social Worker on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan may be found on the school website.
<https://woolgrove.herts.sch.uk/about-us/school-policies/>

(See also the Virtual School 'Kinder by Design' checklist for revision of school behaviour policy)

Statutory Educational Planning for all Children Looked After

Statutory Personal Education Plans (ePEP)

The school 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.

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

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for all children through quality first teaching and a drive to best possible outcomes for all children. Children known to a social worker, as shown in the Government's [Children in Need review \(2019\)](#) evidenced for the first time that these children do significantly worse than others at all stages of education and that poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends.

- They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After 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.
- They 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.
- They 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.

- The school 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 the PP+ funding for CLA and to inform the school Governing Body in an annual report.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is a Statutory Post and in 2022 – 2023 is Richard Pritchard. He is a qualified teacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA by:

- ensuring that the CLA or PLA has access to quality first teaching
- tracking the progress of CLA and PLA across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book looks
- ensuring that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA, including attachment theory and trauma-informed practice
- delivering training to ensure staff awareness and knowledge of attachment, trauma and ACES.
- providing and attending training and offering advice to the whole school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive, relationship-based and has high expectations for CLA and PLA
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of CLA and PLA and school resource and staff training needs for working with this group
- working alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead to support and promote the education of children with a Social Worker on an Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.

Prioritising CLA for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria (see guidance [here](#))

- ensuring that CLA and PLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- completing the annual Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) of each CLA as requested, to inform their annual CLA health review.

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for all Children with a Social Worker, by:

- reading this 'school policy' for Children with a Social Worker
- attending relevant training, e.g Herts. Steps or the Virtual School toolkit training on 'Attachment Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' (to be found on the Virtual School [website](#))
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher
- referring to the Designated Teacher for advice
- developing skills to be able to work in a relational way

- 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
- understand that some degree of unconscious-bias about children with a social worker may exist and will mitigate against such a situation through careful reflection and ensuring that all decisions about these children are justifiable, equitable and fair.

Attendance:

School attendance procedures will reflect the specific needs of all children with a Social Worker to ensure that they have good school attendance and punctuality. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools, 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 (including the Virtual School for children who are looked after), promptly.

Admissions/ Transitions:

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

- 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 to the school or transition from school elsewhere:

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

Additional Educational Needs:

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

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria (see guidance [here](#))
- Use Pupil Premium strategically as follows:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium>

Non-eligible pupils

- Schools can spend their Pupil Premium on pupils who do not meet eligibility criteria but need extra support.

Examples

Schools can use the Pupil Premium (not Pupil Premium Plus) to support other pupils, for example if they:

- Are in contact with a social worker
- Used to be in contact with a social worker
- Are acting as a carer

- 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 over-sight
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the targets set as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, ePEP and Annual Report to Governors

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities:

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

- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is ‘additional to and different from’ the universal and additional needs provision
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight
- that with the school SENCO, the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained.

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on any child with a Social Worker by: familiarising themselves with the ‘*School Policy Guidance for Children in Care*’ and following the school’s child protection policy and the current KCSIE [guidance](#) ‘*DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education*’ (All staff) *September 2022*, if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Suspensions and Exclusion:

We have reviewed our school’s Promoting Positive Behaviour policy (*Sept 2022*) alongside the [Behaviour in Schools Guidance 2022](#) and the new [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, guidance \(2022\)](#). In force from 1st September 2022, replacing the 2017 guidance.

- We understand that our policy on behaviour concerns the conduct of staff and children alike. We understand that behaviour management is completely influenced by the relationships we foster between all adults and children who are part of this school, and that learning about behaviour regulation is taught as well as ‘caught’.
- We understand that the purpose of our Behaviour Policy is to provide all adults and children in our school with a safe, inclusive, learning environment in which everybody is respected.
- We will make every effort to avoid excluding a child with a Social Worker, 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 the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School.

- If there is no option other than suspension from the usual timetable, then we will make every attempt to negotiate an alternative learning pathway before considering withdrawal of time out of and the routine of school and will always keep the number of days out of the in-school routine to a minimum.
- We realise that Permanent Exclusion from school should be the last possible resort for this group, particularly Children Looked After whose entire living arrangements could be affected as a result. The Virtual School will always support schools to find an effective alternative solution
- 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. (Section 59: [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61222/suspension-and-permanent-exclusion-from-maintained-schools-academies-and-pupil-referral-units-in-england-including-pupil-movement.pdf))
- We will use the following methods to avoid suspending a child known to a Social Worker;
 - *(To be completed by the school).*

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).*

Alternative Provision: To be read in conjunction with the 2022 Behaviour in Schools guidance [here](#)

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

- a plan that will retain the child with a Social Worker on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for essential reporting and accountable for the PP+ if CLA or PLA
- an agreed part of the overall ePEP for the child if CLA
- full time (25 hours or 32.5 by September 2023) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the child with a Social Worker
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that any statutory planning, for example the Child Protection Plan or ePEPs will include both the school and the alternative provider *to physical abuse, if reasonable adjustments have been made).*

Multi-Agency Working:

- **School staff will make every effort to** develop positive professional relationships with colleagues from other agencies, especially colleagues from Social Care, and

facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of children with a Social Worker.

- The Virtual School **Professional Partnership Programme** is a response to the '*duty to promote the education of children with a social worker*' and offers the opportunity for schools and social workers to swap roles for a day to increase the understanding the roles and responsibilities and promote better joint practice. The Virtual School website has more information about this work.

The Headteacher, Designated Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the Statutory Guidance and practice outlined in this policy.

Date: September 2023

Review date: September 2023

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After

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September 2022

Appendix 1 – the Revised New Duty June 2022

The New Duty Update 2022/23

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Government's [Children in Need review \(2019\)](#) evidenced for the first time that at least 1.6 million children have needed a social worker between 2012/13 and 2017/18 – equivalent to 1 in 10 of all children. The review showed that these children do significantly worse than others at all stages of education and that poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends.

VSH leadership is vital now more than ever given the impact the pandemic has had on the learning of all children but none more so than the most vulnerable. For example, in the 2020/21 academic year Children in Need (CiN) lost an average of 4.1 months of learning in secondary school reading compared with 2.4 months for all children. Children with a social worker (CWSW) are around 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school and between 2 to 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their peers.

Funding for this strategic leadership role for children with a social worker is confirmed until the end of March 2023.

Who are CWSW?

Includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker **within the past 6 years due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons**. It includes all children aged 0 to 18 across all education settings subject to a CiN plan or a Child Protection plan.

The new strategic role of the VSH

- Make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities, including with children's social care
- Promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm
- Level up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential. This will include helping to ensure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover educationally from the impact of the pandemic

Identify needs and address barriers

- Use data and analysis to understand and monitor the cohort's needs including making links to local strategic priorities e.g., attendance, suspension, and permanent exclusion rates.
- Share knowledge and expertise to strengthen how education settings and social care understand the impact of adversity on learning and educational outcomes of children.
- Promote professional practice for education settings and local authorities.

Attendance

- For children with a social worker, attending school is also a protective factor, offering a safe space when home is not, away from the threat of gangs, crime, or exploitation.
- During the pandemic in 2020/21 persistent absence figures were 12.3% for all pupils and 41.2% for CiN.
- VSHs may wish to strengthen engagement with DTs through established local networks to share advice, best practice, or training to support attendance and raise awareness of the barriers these children can face.

Elective home education

- When a family notifies the local authority of their intention to home educate, we recommend that local authorities, schools, and other key professionals (such as social workers) work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible.
- This is particularly pertinent if a child has SEN or has a social worker.
- VSHs should refer to the Government guidance on [elective home education](#).
- Introduced in the [Schools Bill in May 2022](#), the Government will require each local authority to establish a registration system for children not in school. The measures will make each authority responsible for maintaining a register of children not in school, including electively home-educating children, and have a duty to provide support to those families where they request it.

Mental health and wellbeing

- VSHs should work with their local authority lead for mental health, responsible for linking with education settings
- The VSH should ensure that mental health training includes:
 - the value of a graduated approach to assessing, understanding, and meeting the social, emotional, and mental health needs of children and young people with a social worker
 - how to identify signs of potential mental health issues for children with a social worker and how to access further assessment and support where necessary
 - understanding the impact of issues that children with a social worker can experience and that settings are able to offer targeted support to meet the needs of these children
 - how to recognise the value of engaging the child's voice in the process of identification and support
- VSHs may also want to work with individual school senior mental health leads (SMHL), where the role exists, to ensure children with a social worker are factored into the school's strategy on mental health and wellbeing

Recovery programmes

- VSHs should be aware of the following initiatives, given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on CWSW, and work with education settings to ensure these children are able to access the following support:
 - [The National Tutoring Programme](#)
 - [The Summer School Programme](#)

- [Recovery Premium](#)

SEN

- A significant proportion of children with a social worker may also be identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) or may be disabled.
- VSHs should work strategically with the local authority Head of SEND and, where appropriate, with school leaders and SENCOs, to ensure that education settings adopt a graduated approach.

Advice and guidance

- VSHs are not being asked to work with individual children with a social worker as replicating existing professional relationships and support would be counterproductive and burdensome to children and their families.
- VSHs will be best placed to offer advice and information to professionals who are providing direct support to these children.
- Identify and establish links with key professionals e.g., DSL, social workers, headteachers, governors, SENCOs, SMHLs, other local authority officers, including Designated Social Care Officers (DSCOs) for SEND.
- Provide advice on evidence-based interventions that can address barriers to learning, such as those highlighted by [What Works for Children's Social Care](#)
- Engage with research organisations to help develop good practice and build a strong evidence base for what works to improve outcomes of children with social workers.
- Support education settings and social care to be creative and thoughtful in building relationships with children and families.

Research

- VSHs will be invited to participate in research commissioned by the Department to capture emerging practice and contribute to the development of a strong evidence base for how they can effectively promote the educational outcomes of children with social workers.
- The Department will ask all local authorities to share data and information about how their VSH has been supporting children with a social worker and what funding has been used for that support.
- Some local authorities, including VSHs, their teams, and partner agencies, will be invited to take part in focussed interviews to build detailed case studies.