

## POLICY FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

### 1. Policy Statement

The senior members of staff with responsibility for Children Looked After (CLA) aka Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers (CL) are the Curriculum Vice Principals and Vice Principal for Student Services. It is their duty to inform the senior management team and Governors of the progress of students who are in care/care leavers on a regular basis.

#### 1.1 Definition of Children Looked After (CLA)

This policy refers to young people who are Looked After as defined by the Children Act 1989. That is those learners who are under the age of 18 and are:

- The subject of an interim or full-time care or emergency protection order;
- Unaccompanied minors who are asylum seekers;
- Accommodated by a local authority with the agreement of their parent(s) or legal guardian;
- Compulsorily accommodated as a result of criminal proceedings

#### 1.2 Why do Children become Looked After?

A large number of these children coming into care will have a history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Some may have suffered the death of a parent, or have parents who are unable to look after them properly because of illness. Others may have disabilities and many different needs. A very small number are in care because of criminal behaviour.

#### 1.3 How do Children become Looked After?

Children come into care by two main routes: because the parents have asked for this help or because the child is in danger of being harmed.

- Under section 20 of the Children Act 1989: where parents have asked for help, because for some reason their child can no longer stay at home, suitable accommodation for the child will be provided. Parental responsibility remains with the parent/guardian.
- Under section 31 of the Children Act 1989: if the child is in danger of being harmed, a care order will be made by a court. The court will take all the circumstances into careful consideration before doing this. When a care order is made, children's services acquire parental responsibility and become a legal parent alongside the parent/guardian.

#### 1.4 Who are Young Care Leavers (CL)?

A Care Leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date. Between the ages of sixteen to eighteen a young person who has been Looked After will be expected to begin the transition towards independent living to become a Young Care Leaver. They may remain with their

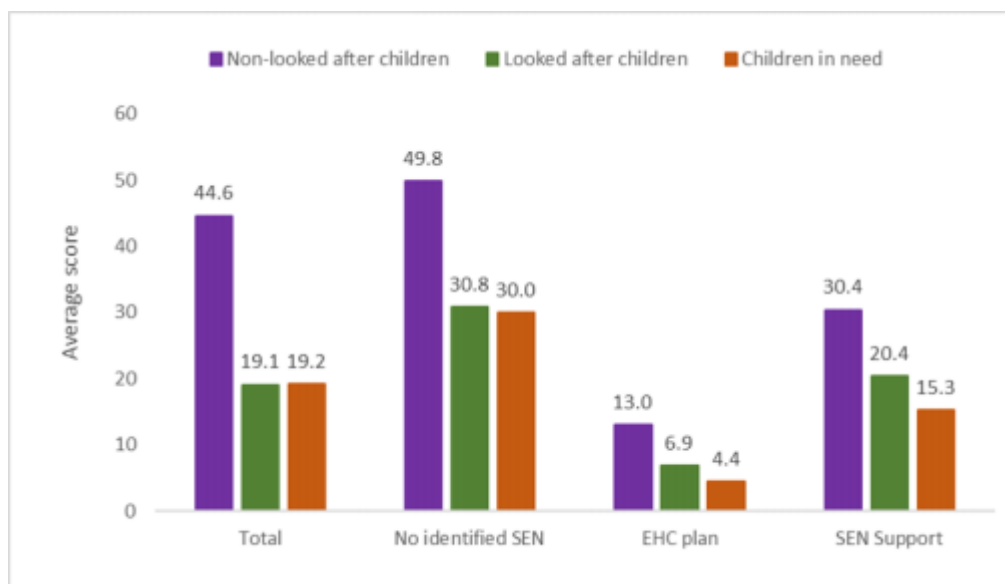
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Foster Carers or they may move into supported lodgings or into a bedsit or flat depending on the provision available. From the age of sixteen they will be supported by their Local Authority Leaving Care Team.

### 1.5 Context

Although there have been some improvements in outcomes for CLA in recent years, these remain significantly lower than those for all children. Colleges can play a significant part in ensuring that children in care / care leavers are enabled to participate and be successful in education. Recent Department of Education data highlights that in England:

- In 2019 average attainment scores of children in care at key stage 4 were 19.1 in comparison to a score of 44.6 for children who are not looked after (DfE 2019)
- 53% of children looked after at the end of key stage 4 have a special educational need (SEN) identified as do 48% of children in need in comparison to 14% of non-looked after children. The higher prevalence of SEN amongst looked after children and children in need, in part explains the large attainment gaps in comparison to non-looked after children (DfE)
- In 2017/18, 78% of children looked after who completed key stage 4 in 2016/17 were sustained in education or employment in comparison to 94% of pupils who were non-looked after children (DfE)
- According to 2019 data – children looked after are more than five times more likely to have a fixed period exclusion than all children, and nearly one and a half times more likely than children in need (DfE)
- Only 6% of Careleavers were known to progress onto higher education in 2018 in comparison to 28% of the 18-year-old UK population (UCAS)
- 39% of Care Leavers aged 19-21 years old were not in education, employment or training in comparison to 12% of all young people aged 19-21 years old (DfE)



Supporting these young people to succeed and progress to higher education, employment and a better future, as set out in this policy, is a priority of South Thames College Group. This policy has been written in line with the

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Statutory Guidance 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children 2018:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683556/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

The College's approach to supporting the achievements of CLA and CL will aim to:

### 1.6 Pre-Entry

- Develop and maintain effective links with local authorities and other partners to publicise and make available information, advice and guidance (including financial and other forms of support) about progression and study in FE/HE.
- Provide impartial, free and confidential pre-course guidance on FE/HE study options, including financial and other forms of support.
- Provide accessible information about taster days and other events.
- Provide a range of informational materials relevant to study and support options and make them available and accessible through a range of formats.
- Put indicators in place throughout the recruitment process to help identify those in care/care leavers either through the local authority, support agencies or through self- disclosure.

### 1.7 On-Course

- Identify a member of staff within the central student support team to co-ordinate and lead on internal and external communications regarding CLA and CL.
- An assigned Personal Tutor who will serve as the key contact for CLA/CL. These staff will also offer and provide support prior to entry and throughout the duration of the student's course including identification of suitable support arrangements as required.
- Provide Full Bursary support for CLA to support them with college related costs please see Appendix B for further details.
- Monitor CLA attendance in accordance with the College's existing policy for managing student absence. Provide careers guidance relating to progression within FE/HE/Apprenticeships or careers and will support with applications.

### 1.8 End of Course

- Obtain feedback from students who are CLA/CL about our support offer, delivery and their distance travelled.
- Maintain records of the recruitment, retention, achievement and progression of our students in care/care leavers.

## 2. Responsibility of Designated Safeguarding Governor

The designated member of the college will:

- Monitor the College's implementation of its CLA/CL policy through the annual Self-Assessment Report.
- Ensure that the College has a senior member of staff with responsibility for CLA/CL.
- Review the retention and attainment progress of CLA/CL

### 2.1 Responsibility of Heads of Section/Head of School

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- Ensure that the transition to College is as smooth as possible for these learners and takes account of their particular needs.
- Review learner's progress and attendance regularly, ensuring that required support is in place and effective. Ensure student support and local authority is informed and that interventions are regularly monitored.
- Ensure local authorities and the allocated Student Support/ Engagement Advisor are informed of all APLB procedures and invited to relevant meetings/aware of outcomes.

## 2.2 Responsibility of Personal Tutor

- Induct, support and monitor CLA/CL progress through 1-1 review meetings.
- Signpost further support via College referral process and inform local authorities/carer of any concerns.
- Integrate Personal Education Plan meetings with local authorities into the ILP/Progress review process.
- Make a referral to the allocated Student Support/ Engagement Advisor for Pastoral Support where there are concerns.
- Inform the allocated Student Support/Engagement Advisor of any external PEP meeting requests (via ProMonitor).
- Attend relevant CPD around supporting students that are CLA/CL.
- Check student is in receipt of Full Bursary.

## 2.3 Responsibility of Attendance Monitors / Curriculum Administrators

- Set-up Promonitor CLA/CL learner lists per School for Heads of Section/Heads of School to monitor
- Investigate and contact the relevant Head of Section in instances where CLA/CL attendance information has not been received regularly (after two weeks) and falls below 85% in order to support the student's retention and success.
- Monitor attendance and inform allocated Tutor of any CLA/CL learners with attendance concerns (via ProMonitor comment).
- Update 'Further Details' section of Promonitor to include CLA/CL Virtual School/Social Worker contact details and any missing badge information.
- Notify and invite Local Authority Virtual School/Social Workers and Student Engagement Advisors to PEP/Review/APLB meetings.

## 2.4 Responsibility of Student Support

- Student Support will liaise with local authorities to ensure that the college is aware of all CLA/CL please see Appendix A for further details.
- Student Support will inform curriculum areas of local authority contacts or concerns where appropriate.
- Student Support will contact all identified students that are CLA/CL to inform them about the student bursary available to them and note details of the allocated Student Support/ Engagement Advisor under 'further details' and 'learner comments' on ProMonitor.
- Student Support will set-up a list of CLA/CL learners on ProMonitor so that local authorities can access the relevant information via the data sharing protocols.
- Student Support will offer 1-1 pastoral support to CLA/CL students where there are concerns through the standard referral process via Confidential Comments.
- Student Support/Student Engagement Advisors will support and attend PEP and APLB meetings if they are a referred learner with concerns on their caseload.

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- Liaise with the Quality team to highlight relevant CPD opportunities for staff.
- Student Support will produce a bi-annual report for JSMT/CMT to highlight CLA/CL retention, success rates and any concerns.

## 2.5 Responsibilities of ALS

- Inform Student Support of any CLA/CL who also have learning difficulties/ disabilities.
- Inform Student Support of any CLA/CL with EHCP's.
- Work with the Personal Tutor, Local Authority and Student Support/Engagement Advisor (if appropriate) to combine EHCP and PEP meetings as part of the ILP/Progress review process.
- Ensure swift access to additional learning support for CLA/CL whose learning needs are disclosed after entry to College.

## 2.6 Local Authorities

- Complete and agree the College service level and information sharing agreement
- Encourage applicants to make appropriate disclosures and attend interviews
- Inform the College of any potential applicants and ensure a smooth transition onto course
- Access all CLA/CL attendance/monitoring data and reports via ProMonitor
- Chair/Lead on any CLA/CL PEP meetings and subsequent documentation
- Ensure effective support is provided i.e. with housing placement, equipment/resources, extra tuition and any other financial assistance in order for CLA/CL to achieve
- Update College of any pastoral concerns or issues impacting on CLA/CL achievement
- Ensure the data protection principles are upheld and appoint data officers/notify College of changes as per agreement

Only store the data accessed on ProMonitor within this system and do not extract unless for the purpose of a PEP meeting with signed consent and agreement with CLA/CL and in accordance with your own Data Protection and Information Security Policies

## 3. Information Sharing and Data Protection

Students can give permission for information to be given to all staff who deal with them. Otherwise the information will only be shared on a "need to know basis" and only with appropriate staff, such as the Personal Tutor.

Information requests from local authorities will only be met:

- If written consent has been given by the student (unless the student is at risk of significant harm).
- If a College information sharing and service level agreement has been signed by the organisation requesting the information.
- Via the Promonitor Parent Portal website which local authorities will access directly through a secure log-in access issued by the College IT Department.

## 4. Personal Education Plans

Please see Appendix C for further details, all associated documentation can also be found on Moodle

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### Associated documentation

- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children 2014
- APLB Policy
- Tutor Handbook
- PEP Guidance for Personal Tutors
- Personal Tutor CLA Support Guideline
- Learner Consent Form
- Service Level and Information Sharing Agreement
- KC PEP Template

### Approval and monitoring

- The Vice Principal Student Services will review the Policy annually.

### Review

Sept 2021 by Vice Principal Student Services

### Appendix A CLA/CL Annual Procedure

Timeframe	Action
<b>April – August</b>	Local Authorities identify and send any future student applicant information to Student Support Services
<b>September – October</b>	1. Local Authorities send through lists of confirmed applicants to Student Support  2. Personal Tutors undertake ILP / PEP meetings for CLA/CL students  3. Student Support also identify CLA/CL through self-declaration report and bursary applications  4. Student Support/Student Engagement Advisor contact to update student record in ProMonitor  5. Local Authorities issued with ProMonitor Learner Portal access
<b>October - November</b>	1. Confirmed CLA/CL information compiled by Student Support and sent to Curriculum Areas  2. CLA/CL Learner badge information updated on ProMonitor by Student Support and Curriculum Areas  3. CLA/CL Learners monitored by Tutor/ALS/Heads of School/CMs

	4. Local Authorities access learner attendance and ILP/Progress Review information as required
<b>October – November</b>	Curriculum Areas/Administrators to notify/invite Local Authority and Student Support/Student Engagement Advisor if any APLB Stage 2's issued
<b>December- January</b>	1. PEP meetings integrated into Progress review week meetings, Local Authority Social Workers/Virtual Schools invited to attend  2. Local Authority Social Workers/Virtual Schools invited to Parent evenings if learner aware and consents

## Appendix B FINANCIAL SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR CLA/CARELEAVER

The **Full Bursary** of £1,200 per year is available to students who meet the following criteria:

- Are in Care/a Care Leaver
- Are enrolled on a full-time further education government funded course
- Are aged 16-18 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017
- Have 'home' student status or have been granted full 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' status
- Have been 'ordinary resident' in the UK, EU or EEA continuously for the last three years with 'settled status' which means having indefinite leave to remain
- Maintain at least 85% attendance

The Bursary is paid weekly, directly into the student bank account, provided they have at least 85% attendance in the previous week.

Process for applying:

- All applicants who declare CLA/ CL status will be contacted with application details, consent forms and evidence requirements (letter from Social Worker confirming status as CLA/ CL)
- All Local Authorities / Virtual Schools will be sent information on Bursary so they can support young people in applying and provide appropriate evidence
- Bursary will be promoted to all students to encourage CLA/CL to declare and apply

### Personal Education Plan – Personal Education Allowance

Students that are CLA may be eligible for additional financial support through the PEP meeting process (dependent on age and local authority policy). The Personal Education Allowance (PEA) is a sum of money available each year to help young people progress in their education, there is different financial help available for those aiming to attend University.

Examples of PEA expenditure:

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- Educational Books
- Equipment /specialist kit
- 1:1 Tuition
- Additional support for vocational training
- Educational trips or visits
- Extracurricular activities that will build confidence and self-esteem

All PEA requests need to be discussed and agreed with the local authority Virtual School/Social Worker and student at the PEP meeting in line with the educational targets set, PEA request procedures will vary between boroughs. PEAs are not intended to replace services, support or resources already provided by local authorities or other agencies.

## **Appendix C PEP GUIDANCE FOR PERSONAL TUTORS**

### **What is a Personal Education Plan (PEP)?**

All looked after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part. All of those involved in the process of developing the PEP should use it to support the personalised learning of the child.

The PEP (pre-school to age 18) is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations and builds life chances.

The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the Education provider. All professionals involved should work closely together at each stage of the PEP process and should involve the student and their carer where appropriate.

### **Who has ultimate responsibility for the PEP?**

The Local Authority/Social Worker has responsibility for the PEP as part of their Care Plan.

### **What is a Virtual School?**

Each Local Authority has a Virtual School, it does not exist in real terms as a building, and children and young people do not attend. It is a service provided by dedicated professionals within the Children, Schools and Families Directorate whose work is to promote and co-ordinate educational support for Looked After Children and Care Leavers to succeed and have high educational aspirations for them at nursery, school, college and university; wherever their place of learning.

### **Who should initiate a PEP?**

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The Local Authority/Social Worker/Virtual School has a duty to initiate the PEP. The completion of the PEP takes place at the PEP meeting and professionals within the meeting negotiate who takes the lead to complete the PEP form. The Social Worker may take the lead for some parts and the Personal Tutor for the others.

### **PEP content and format?**

Each Local Authority has a different process for gathering data and writing PEPs, some use paperwork which they complete others now use an EPEP which they require Schools to complete. In order to have a consistent and efficient approach as an organisation, Carshalton/Kingston College staff are required to direct the local authority to ProMonitor.

Typical targets/outcomes of a PEP meeting may involve:

- Ongoing catch-up support for those that have fallen behind with coursework (including use of effective intervention strategies)
- Identify short-term targets around attendance, learning needs/skills, or knowledge
- Identify longer-term aspirational targets around managing money, HE, work experience, careers
- Identify any additional support needs and subsequent referral
- Agreement of payment by the Local Authority for additional 1-1 tuition or equipment required for studies
- Transition support from Social Care where a young person is on a new course or in a new residential placement
- Change or review of residential placement / increased support in placement
- Referral by Social Worker to specialist agencies e.g. CAMHS /Substance Misuse team
- Careers advice and guidance appointment / or financial information about higher education
- Support with bursary application arranged
- Learner consent / agreement of information sharing and review date
- Equipment identified / to support with learning needs

### **How often should it be written?**

The PEP process should be integrated into the ILP and Progress review meeting cycles of the Personal Tutor. If a child has recently joined the education setting a PEP should be completed within 20 course days. It is useful to have a PEP meeting prior to the young person's statutory CLA/CL review, so that any issues raised in the PEP can be highlighted by the Social Worker at the CLA/CL review. Plans should be amended if there is a major change to the young person's situation e.g. placement or authority.

### **Who needs to be present?**

The young person, Personal Tutor and Social Worker/Virtual School and if appropriate carer/other specialist professional e.g. Support Student Engagement Advisor or Cultural Capital.

### **Where should it take place and for how long?**

Meetings should take place at the college (not offsite). College staff need to be time specific as to the time they have available with the local authority representatives.

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