

Policy for Children Looked After (CLA)

Date approved: 30 April 2025

Review cycle/date: Every year; May 2026

Party responsible: Headteacher, Student Committee

Linked policies: Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy; Attendance Policy; Behaviour & Exclusions Policy; SEND Policy; Policy for Preventing & Tackling Bullying; Curriculum Policy; Accessibility Policy

The Swanage School believes it has a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children Looked After and provide focussed pastoral support. The School understands the powerful role it can play in significantly improving the quality of life and the educational experiences of these students. Our school ethos which promotes respect for all students, values diversity and is centred around developing strong relationships with every student provides a secure environment in which to achieve these outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant school policies, including those on School policies on Inclusion, Behaviour, Safeguarding and Child Protection, PHSE, Racial Equality and Diversity, SEND, Anti-bullying, Attendance, Curriculum and the School Development Plan.

While a supportive whole-school approach is essential, evidence shows it is not sufficient by itself. Children Looked After (CLA) may be overlooked unless there are specific policies and practices in place to identify and address their unique needs. The educational achievement of CLA students remain disproportionately, and unacceptably, low. Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 places a legal duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of these children. Schools also play a key role in ensuring these students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

To ensure that The Swanage School meets the educational, social and emotional needs of CLA the school will:

1. Appoint a Designated teacher and governor for CLA, to advocate for these students, ensure their voices are heard, and their needs represented in whole-school planning.
2. Maintain an up-to-date record of CLA including contact details and care status, and ensure the accuracy and confidentiality of their personal data in line with GDPR and data protection policies.
3. Closely monitor the progress and attendance of CLA students and provide suitable interventions if necessary, having regard to the individual needs of every student.
4. Ensure each CLA has an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP), reviewed every term, that reflects the student's academic progress, emotional wellbeing, achievements and targets, in line with statutory guidance.

5. Work in partnership with all professionals, parents and carers of looked after students.
6. Attend and contribute to all PEP meetings and attend CLA reviews as required, ensuring that the voice of the child is central to all planning and decision making
7. Provide Governors with an anonymised annual report on the attainment, progress, attendance, exclusions and destinations of CLA. This will support governors to monitor impact and hold the school to account. This will include:
 - a. The number of Children Looked After on the school's roll (if any).
 - b. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
 - c. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any) for CLA pupils.
 - d. The destinations of CLA pupils who leave the school.

The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

8. Ensure that CLA and Previously Looked After Children are given the highest priority in admissions, in accordance with the Schools Admissions Policy and relevant legislation.
9. Seek to understand and address the underlying causes of behaviour for CLA, following the school's restorative behaviour policy to support positive relationships, repair harm, and avoid exclusion wherever possible.
10. All CLA will be offered the opportunity of having fortnightly mentoring sessions, with an appropriate adult as agreed with carers and professionals and in partnership with the individual student.
11. Ensure the Designated Teacher has training for their role, has access to continuing professional development, and shares relevant knowledge with school staff to promote a whole-school understanding of the needs of CLA and Previously Looked After Children.
12. Liaise with other schools and educational providers to facilitate the effective transfer of students, recognising that for some looked after students change of care placement will result in school transfer during the school year.
13. Communicate high expectations and celebrate the achievements of our looked after students.
14. Collaborate closely with the Virtual School Head and their team to ensure adequate provision, and to monitor progress, coordinate support, and access additional resources..

Governor

The named Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After in the school:

Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher

Designated Teacher

The named nominated teacher with special responsibility for Children Looked After in the school:

Ms J Maraspin (Headteacher)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead also has responsibility for Children Looked After:

Ms A-M Forde