



**Policy for: Children Looked After,
Previously Looked After, Children known
to a social worker and those in Kinship
Care**

BEDWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Bedwell Crescent,
Stevenage, Herts, SG1 1NJ**

Revised March 2026

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

This policy aims to:

- Summarise how we will meet statutory guidance to promote the educational achievement and welfare of all Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (CPLA) on the roll of our school.
- Outline how our school will promote the education of Children with a Social Worker (CSW) and Children in Kinship Care

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLA

Richard Whitehouse (SENCo)

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and PLA

Peter Browning/Annette Keech

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

Emma Shaw

At Bedwell Primary 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](#).

As a school, we acknowledge and understand the intention of the [Virtual School Head Role Extension to Children with a Social Worker](#) (updated July 2025), 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 and those in kinship care arrangements.

We understand that this guidance includes all children who are most vulnerable and educationally disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a supportive and stable base for all children and in promoting their academic, social, and emotional development. We understand the need for annual whole school staff training on trauma 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 children can experience.

We will create an environment in which all children have a strong sense of belonging and feel valued and nurtured.

Our aim is to establish a safe and inclusive culture within the school to support the well-being of both staff and pupils with a shared understanding of the inter-relationship between learning, well-being and safeguarding.

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'*. **DfE: Behaviour in schools Advice for headteachers and school staff** February 2024. We will embed the principles and best practice for [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#). Children, families and school staff are still recovering from the impact of the Covid pandemic. As a school, we see each academic year as an opportunity to develop our school staff to engage in positive relational practice to enable all children to achieve the best possible outcomes, and to prioritise wellbeing for all within the school community.

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.

We deliver annual training on the Attachment-Aware and Trauma-Informed Toolkit to all school staff.

Our staff feel confident in de-escalation and restorative practices, and have undertaken additional training around Unconditional Positive Regard approaches which are particularly important for these groups of children. This professional learning for all staff will help to create an ethos where all of those working within the school feel confident in reporting and evidencing issues relating to equality and diversity.

Our Behaviour Policy is for staff and pupils alike. We understand that positive 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 members of the school community - parents and carers, teachers, ancillary staff, visiting specialists and pupils. Our expectation is everyone within the school will interact with respect, kindness, and integrity.

Equality and Diversity:

The implementation of this Policy requires a reflection on those learners who have many overlapping experiences: discrimination because of a protective characteristic, SEND, poverty, other adverse childhood experiences. 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 to enable Hertfordshire schools to provide opportunity for all. See [here](#) for the Hertfordshire strategy.

We recognise the need to train all staff to reflect on their values, beliefs and professional responses to children. We will promote self-awareness and will facilitate regular reflective space for staff to prevent unconscious bias and to ensure that expectations and aspirations are high for every child.

2. AIMS

Our aims for CLA:

- 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 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- The gap between the attainment of children with a social worker and their peers is narrowed and accelerated through appropriate interventions and support.
- 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 nurturing support that includes a strong relationship between school staff, parents or carers and children.
- Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After are positively identified within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for.
- Our Behaviour Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour, and it is understood that all behaviour is communication and staff respond with compassion and care. 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 and their families feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged in this school community.

3. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Personal Education Plans (ePEP) and CLA Self Evaluation Forms (CLASEF):

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:

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for all children through high quality learning and teaching and a drive to best possible outcomes for each and every child.

The Headteacher and Governing Body:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After in 2024 is Richard Whitehouse. 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 the Virtual School training: 'An introduction to Attachment Aware and Trauma-informed Practice' to the whole school;
- 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 and children in Kinship Care.
- prioritising CLA and CPLA for school-based additional support
- ensuring that CLA and CPLA 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 CLA and PLA by:

- attending relevant training, including 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
- be aware of the existence of potential unconscious bias about children with a social worker and will mitigate against such a situation through careful reflection and ensuring that all decisions about these children are justifiable, equitable and fair.

4. MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

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

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for all Children Looked After (CLA), Children Previously Looked After (CPLA), Children with a Social Worker (CSW), Children in Kinship Care who have special educational needs and disabilities by ensuring:

- that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic.
- that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision
- that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- 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's child protection policy and the current DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2025) [guidance](#) if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Suspensions and Exclusion:

We have reviewed the school behaviour policy (*enter date*) alongside the [Behaviour in Schools \(2024\)](#) and the new [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, guidance \(2024\)](#).

- 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 suspending a Child Looked After or Child Previously Looked After, 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.
- Where a Child Looked After is at risk of suspension or exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the linked Virtual School Education Adviser as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
- Where a Child Previously Looked After is at risk of exclusion, the designated teacher will talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking the advice of the Virtual School on avoiding exclusion.
- We will explore alternative positive options which prioritise the young person's learning.
- We will keep the number of days out of the in-school routine to a strict minimum.
- We will always contact The Virtual School for support to find an effective solution which best meets the needs of the Child Looked After.
- We understand that 'where a Child Looked After (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 to discuss support for the individual child to reduce harm to the child's future education and to plan the best way to resolve the situation'. (Section 60: [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk))

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 special educational needs.

Contacts

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After

- Website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool
- Twitter: @VS_HCC
- Email: virtualschool@hertfordhsire.gov.uk
- Phone: 01992 556915

APPENDIX 1 - POSITIVE APPROACHES TO USE WITH CLA CHILDREN

1. Be happy

Smile and welcome our pupils especially the ones that are most challenging, make them feel noticed and valued.

2. Be kind

Don't humiliate or ridicule, well placed banter can be well received but this is a really difficult balance to strike.

3. Be there

Listen to their point of view, show understanding and make them feel like they belong.

4. Be fair

Consistency is something all students appreciate and none more so than these pupils.

5. Be positive

We all know positive encouragement goes a long way. Often at risk pupils enter into a negative downward spiral and putting in positivity can be a very powerful thing. Maybe think of something that you know they will be successful at and create opportunities for them to feel good about themselves. It could be their little bit of light in all the dark.

6. Be brave

One successful strategy is to make the most difficult pupils your favourite and start to treat them like that. Children like to feel like they belong and that their opinions matter, get the least likely students involved in things you could tap into potential that would otherwise go unnoticed.

7. Be planned

Structure is something that gives children a safety net, they like to know what's coming next and what to expect. This is really important as surprises can unsettle a child especially ones with complex and difficult lives. This is really important for the

role of the form tutor too where schools rely heavily on them giving out messages to students, allow time in your morning to make sure this happens.

8. Be practical

Hands on learning works best for most students. It allows variety and develops interest but more importantly it can bring learning to life and give context. Plan in activities to break up the learning; this gives time and space for children's concentration, as well as giving the opportunity for teaching social skills. Small groups work best, its less exposure and kind enough to allow at risk students to flourish.

And finally...

These tips would benefit all our pupils but sometimes we get hung up on the 'difficult ones' as they present our biggest challenges. Class teachers can have the greatest effect on reducing exclusions as they are the ones that see the children every day.