



Innovation, Aspiration and Excellence

Children Looked After (CLA) / Previously Children Looked After (PCLA) Policy

Policy & Procedure Number	HS024		
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Category	Equality and Inclusion		
Authorised By	Local Governing Board		
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Last revised by	Chloe Buckenham	Sep 2025	
Version	1.4		
Status	Under Review:		
	Approved and Adopted:		✓
Issue Date	SEPTEMBER 2025		
Next Review Date	SEPTEMBER 2026		
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1. Definition

At Houlton School, we aim to provide excellence for, and from every pupil, so that there is equality of opportunity and aspiration for all of the young people with whom we work. For the purposes of this policy 'children looked after by a local authority' (CLA) includes children who are looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. 'Previously' children looked after (PCLA) is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. A child is in 'state care' outside of England and Wales if s/he is in care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Houlton School recognises that 'CLA' and 'PCLA' children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

2. Key Facts

Nationally, 'Child Looked After' (CLA) and 'Previously Child Looked After' (PCLA) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. 75% of CLA and PCLA leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping CLA and PCLA succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority at Houlton School.

3. School Commitment

Houlton School recognises that CLA and PCLA can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that CLA and PCLA may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra

activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances.

Houlton School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of CLA and PCLA in the following ways:

- having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education;
- recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing;
- achieving stability and continuity;
- prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance;
- promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes;
- promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child;
- maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible;
- ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of children who are looked after; and
- ensuring an appropriately trained designated teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for children who are looked after.

All CLA and PCLA will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Houlton School and the Transforming Lives Educational Trust family will seek to support all children. Roles within the school/Trust will be as follows.

5. The Principal will:

- identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for CLA and PCLA, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the designated teacher leave the school or take sick leave;

- ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of CLA and PCLA and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations;
- report on the progress, attendance and conduct of CLA and PCLA to all parties involved;
- ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance;
- ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used to good effect, for the benefit of all disadvantaged pupils and for the whole pupil body. This funding should not be assigned to individual pupils, but a cumulative amount to improve learning experiences and progress.

6. The Local Governing Board will:

- ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CLA and PCLA;
- ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of CLA and PCLA;
- allocate resources to meet the needs of CLA and PCLA;
- ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs;
- ensure that the school has a designated teacher, and that the designated teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below;
- support the Principal, the designated teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of CLA and PCLA are recognised and met; and
- receive a report once a year setting out:
 - ❖ the number of CLA and PCLA pupils on the school's roll (if any);
 - ❖ their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils;
 - ❖ their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils;
 - ❖ the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any);
 - ❖ the destinations of pupils who leave the school; and
 - ❖ the information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

7. Designated Teacher

Government Guidance says that the designated teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for CLA and PCLA assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After Policy shares and supports high expectations for them.” It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Houlton School’s designated teacher is Chloe Buckenham, Vice Principal for Curriculum, Personal Development, and Safeguarding.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child’s social worker;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews;
- ensure that each CLA and PCLA has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the designated teacher, but should be based on the child’s own wishes;
- track academic progress and target support appropriately;
- co-ordinate any support for the CLA and PCLA that is necessary within school;
- ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis;
- encourage CLA and PCLA to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning;
- ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings;
- act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of CLA and PCLA;
- set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion;
- ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school;

- be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education;
- track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life;
- be aware that 60% of CLA and PCLA say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy; and
- ensure that attendance is monitored.

8. All our staff will:

- have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA and PCLA, as for all pupils;
- maintain CLA and PCLA confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively;
- respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information;
- work to enable CLA and PCLA to achieve stability and success within school;
- promote the self-esteem of all CLA and PCLA;
- have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of CLA and PCLA; and
- be aware that 60% of CLA and PCLA say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's Preventing Bullying Policy.

Houlton School recognises the voice of children in care in Warwickshire and therefore makes reference to CLA as 'Children in Care' ("CiC") and PCLA as 'Previously Children in Care' ("PCiC").

9. Monitoring

This policy will be regularly reviewed to meet the needs of pupils in our care. The Vice Principal for Personal Development, Behaviour, and Safety will review this policy annually in liaison with the Inclusion Team.