



Notre Dame High School

Looked After Children Policy

Notre Dame High School,
Fulwood Road, Sheffield S10 3BT
Telephone: 0114 230 2536 Fax: 0114 230 8833
Email: school@notredame-high.co.uk Web: www.notredame-high.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs D Cleary

"In the schools teach whatever is necessary to equip students for life." Saint Julie Billiart

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1. Ethos and Values

Notre Dame High School is a Catholic community committed to sharing the love and goodness of God with everyone. Our mission is rooted in Gospel values and underpins all aspects of school life.

We are committed to:

- recognising and upholding the dignity and worth of every individual
- creating a caring, inclusive community where all members feel safe, valued and supported
- promoting justice, compassion and respect
- embracing diversity and ensuring equality of opportunity for all

In line with the Hallmarks of Notre Dame, we strive to:

- honour the dignity and sacredness of each person
- support those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged
- develop a strong sense of community and belonging
- enable all students to realise their full potential

This ethos underpins our approach to supporting Looked After Children (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PCLA).

2. Purpose

This policy outlines how the school will promote the educational achievement, wellbeing and safeguarding of Looked After Children (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PCLA).

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3. Legal Framework

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

And statutory guidance including:

- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

4. Definitions

4.1 Looked After Children (CLA)

A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.

Each UK nation has a slightly different definition of a looked after child and follows its own legislation, policy and guidance. But in general, looked after children are:

- living with foster parents
- living in a residential children's home or
- living in residential settings like schools or secure units.

In England, the government guidance reads: A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;

4.2 Previously Looked After Children (PCLA)

A child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of:

- An Adoption - Taking full legal and parental responsibility for a child. It is a life-long commitment supported by a permanent adoption order.
- A Child Arrangement Order (CAO) - a legal court order that determines where a child lives, when they spend time with each parent, and any other contact they have. Children who were in care and returned to birth parents are only classed as PCLA if a CAO is in place.
- A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) - a legal court order that gives a person permanent parental responsibility for a child until they are 18. It is used when a child cannot live with their parents but adoption is not appropriate.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Designated Teacher (DT) – Currently Dr M. Williams

The Designated Teacher is a qualified teacher with specific responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of CLA and PCLA.

Key responsibilities include:

- Ensuring all CLA have an up-to-date, high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Monitoring academic progress, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing
- Using data to identify underachievement and implement timely interventions
- Working closely with teaching staff to ensure appropriate differentiation and support
- Liaising with carers, social workers and the Sheffield Virtual School (Notre Dame liaison = Faye Jeffrey)
- Promoting high aspirations and enrichment opportunities

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- Ensuring all CLA and PCLA students are identifiable to staff through the School + cohort.
- Ensuring effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Delivering and cascading staff training
- Advocating for pupils and ensuring their voice is heard
- Supporting transition and post-16 pathways

5.2 Sheffield Virtual School

The school works in partnership with the Sheffield Virtual School, who has a strategic responsibility for promoting the education of CLA and PCLA.

The Sheffield Virtual School will:

- Monitor progress and attainment across settings
- Provide advice, challenge and support to the school
- Quality assure PEPs
- Support effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Provide training and guidance to school staff

The school will engage proactively with the Sheffield Virtual School to improve outcomes.

5.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

For CLA and PCLA, the DSL will:

- Recognise the increased vulnerability of CLA/PCLA
- Work closely with the Designated Teacher
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are identified early and acted upon

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- Maintain effective multi-agency working
- Ensure all staff understand trauma-informed approaches
- Monitor patterns of behaviour, attendance and risk
- Ensure records are accurate, secure and compliant with data protection law

6. Safeguarding

CLA and PCLA are a vulnerable group. The school will follow safeguarding procedures in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with the Designated Teacher.

7. Communication with other agencies

Termly meetings will take place between Sheffield Virtual School, social care and school. These meetings will be used to complete a CLA's Personal education plan (PEP). In addition, there are two 'Looked After Child' (CLA) reviews every year, arranged and chaired by an independent reviewing officer (IRO) from the local authority. The CLA reviews focus on the child's living arrangements, contact with birth family and their general health. The report is completed by the social worker and reviewed by the IRO. School representatives present at the LAC reviews can offer input and will also receive a copy of the report when completed.

The Sheffield Virtual School, social care and school will need to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if school is considering an exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

8. Admissions

The school recognises CLA and PCLA have priority under the School Admissions Code and will ensure prompt admission providing the needs of the child can be met. The school will have due regard to any statutory requirements concerning admission to the school of Looked After Children.

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9. Funding

On September 23rd 2025, the Department for Education published an updated technical note regarding their guidance for Pupil Premium (PP) in which they changed the amount of funding available for CLA and PCLA students.

9.1 CLA Funding

Schools receive £2630 per PCLA (up from £2570 last year). This is also in comparison to £1075 (up from £1050 last year) to those Pupil Premium students who have never been 'looked-after'. This money is paid directly to the school and forms part of our wider pupil premium strategy.

9.2 PCLA Funding

Each CLA is also allocated £2630 (up from £2570 last year). However, it is allocated to the Sheffield Virtual School and is controlled by them. £1800 will be given directly to schools (per CLA child) in 3 equal instalments of £600 each in January, April and August. All payments will be subject to the completion and signing off of a 'good' quality Personal Education Plans (PEP) by a termly deadline. The remainder will be retained (and pooled) by the Virtual school headteacher to identify, commission and deliver targeted projects and initiatives which fall within the aims and objectives of the Virtual School. It can also provide additional funding to individual schools and education establishments (as agreed) to promote attendance and progress, inclusion, participation and prevent exclusion.

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10. Personal education plan (PEP)

The PEP document is made up of the following sections:

1. The PEP meeting – An overview of who has attended the meeting. This is completed by the social worker.
2. About me – This section details a brief life history of the CLA. This is completed by the social worker.
3. Child's input – This section contains the CLA's thoughts about school, their education and their career aspirations. It is completed by the child with the support of a trusted member of staff in school.
4. My education – This section contains a snapshot about attendance, behaviour and well-being. There is also a 'strengths and difficulties' questionnaire that is completed and a score is recorded. This section is completed by the school.
5. SEN provision – This section contains any information regarding Special Educational Needs and provision. This section is completed by the school SENCO.
6. Alternative Provision – This section is completed if a student does not access a full timetable in school and accesses an alternative provider for a portion of their education. This section is completed by the school.
7. Preparation for adulthood – This section details information about the careers guidance and support a student is receiving in school. This is completed by the school.
8. Progress and attainment – This section details how the student is progressing in their subjects. Each subject is measured as being above, at or below expected progress. This is completed by the school.
9. Targets – This is the most detailed and section of the PEP. It firstly details the targets set in the previous PEP. Each of these targets are then reviewed, stating whether it has been fully, partially or not achieved at all. Finally, a new set of outcomes/targets are made. For each target there is justification as to why it has been made, detail of how it will be met and who will be responsible for supporting the student to achieve this target. It is here that any request for additional funding is made should it be needed to help meet this target. This section is completed by the school.

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10. Virtual School Evaluation QA Feedback – This final section is completed by the Virtual School representative following submission of the PEP document. It grades the previous 9 sections as red (inadequate), amber (requires improvement) or green (good/outstanding). There is also an overall grade for the PEP and suggested improvements for the next PEP cycle.

11. Data Protection

Information will be handled sensitively and shared on a need-to-know basis in line with UK GDPR.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Review Date: March 2026

Next Review: March 2027

Responsible Committee: Governors Curriculum and Welfare Committee