

# Applecroft School



## Education of All Children with a Social Worker Policy

*Children Looked After, Previously Looked After  
Children, on a Child in Need or Child Protection  
Plan*

Person Responsible:	Assistant Headteacher
Review Cycle:	Annual
Date of Issue:	January 2026
Review Date:	January 2027

# Education of All Children with a Social Worker Policy

## 1) Introduction:

### **School Vision:**

'To create a positive and inspiring community that nurtures each individual and empowers leaders for life.'

### **School Mission Statement:**

'Nurturing Potential, Inspiring Minds, Changing Lives'

### **School Values:**

- Ambition and Leadership
- Kindness and Supportiveness
- Respect and Honesty
- Determination and Resilience

## 2) Policy Objective:

For the purposes of this policy, all children with a social worker refers to:

- Children Looked After (CLA),
- Children Previously Looked After (PCLA)
- And those children who are on either a Child in Need plan or Child Protection Plan.

To implement

- The 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.
- To 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 Post-CLA:** Ms Ruth Johnson

**Name of the Designated School Trustee for CLA and Post-CLA:** Mrs Claire Coe

**Name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for children with a Social Worker:** Ms Ruth Johnson

At Applecroft School we will ensure that Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PCLA) 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](#).

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

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a supportive and stable base for all children known to a social worker, including CLA and PCLA and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We understand the need for annual whole school staff training on trauma informed 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 want to develop an ethos within the school for all children and young people to feel supported and safe and that they belong through the relationships they make with staff and pupils. We understand the need to work in a 'relationship-based' way so that all children feel valued, nurtured and a part of our school community, particularly those who have experienced a very poor early start in life.

Our aim is to establish a culture within the school that improves the well-being of both staff and pupils through an informed understanding of the inter-relationship between learning, wellbeing, and safeguarding.

We agree with the emerging views on wellbeing being central to a young person's success in education and understand that it is not possible to separate wellbeing and learning. Our commitment is to provide all children and young people on our roll with a breadth of learning experiences that will champion the needs of all children to ensure they make rapid educational and social progress throughout their education journey in this school.

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** [Behaviour in schools guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

We know that it is likely that children have experienced loss and educational damage as a result of the pandemic and 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 to achieve the best possible outcomes and standards.

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 who experienced the Covid-19 pandemic.

We deliver the Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Toolkit training to all school staff and will develop a school response based on the principles that it promotes, to ensure that the whole school takes a holistic approach to well-being for all pupils. We have delivered further training on relational practice supported by Hertfordshire Therapeutic Thinking. Our staff feel confident in de-escalation and restorative practices. 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. Promoting an inclusive environment is key to the well-being

of all pupils, as is a commitment to deepening pupils' understanding of "democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance" (Ofsted 2019).

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, teaching and non-teaching staff, visiting specialists and pupils and everyone within the school is encouraged to interact with respect, kindness, and integrity.

### **Equality and Diversity:**

The implementation of this Policy requires a reflection on those vulnerable learners who have many overlapping needs: race, SEND, poverty etc. 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: [SEND Strategy 2026 - 2029 \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/SEND-Strategy-2026-2029)

We acknowledge that we should train all staff to reflect on their professional responses to children and to prevent unconscious bias from affecting aspiration.

### **3) Our Aims for CLA and PLA children at Applecroft School:**

This section sets out the expected impact to be achieved through the implementation of the policy in school:

- 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, accelerated and rapid progress is made.
- school-based interventions are accessed, even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention
- 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
- 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 discrete support, that includes a strong relationship between school staff, parents or carers and children with a social worker on roll
- children with a social worker are positively identified within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for
- the 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 with a social worker and their families feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged into this school community

### **Educational Planning for Children Looked After:**

#### **Personal Education Plans (ePEP)**

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.

#### **4) Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Headteacher and Board of Trustees 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. Children known to a social worker, as shown in the Government's evidenced for the first time, achieve significantly less well than others at all stages of education and that poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends.

The Headteacher and Board of Trustees:

- 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, with at least two 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 Trustees (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 and to inform the school Board of Trustees in an annual report.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is **Ms Ruth Johnson**. She 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 leadership role with school staff and co-ordinating role with outside agencies
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA/PLA, 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 Board of Trustees on the attainment of CLA and PLA and school resource and staff training needs for working with this group
- working alongside the Designated Safeguarding Leads to support and promote the education of children with a Social Worker on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan
- prioritising CLA/PLA for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria ([DfE Guidance 2018](#))
- ensuring that CLA and PLA 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 all children with a social worker by:

- understanding and promoting the school policy for Children with a Social Worker
- attending relevant training, including the Virtual School toolkit training on 'Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed practice' (to be found on the Virtual School website: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool))
- 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.
- being 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

## 5) **Attendance:**

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of all children with a social worker to ensure 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 carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School Education Hub, as an early intervention, as outlined in our attendance policy.

## 6) 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

## 7) Additional Educational Needs:

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for all Children with a Social Worker with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria ([DfE Guidance 2018](#))
- Use Pupil Premium strategically as follows: [Pupil premium: overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Non-eligible pupils

- Schools can spend their pupil premium on pupils who do not meet eligibility criteria but need extra support.

Examples:

Schools can use the Pupil Premium (not Pupil Premium Plus) to support other pupils, for example if they:

- are in contact with a social worker
- used to be in contact with a social worker
- are acting as a carer

- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight (*in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09*)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the targets set as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit and ePEP

#### 8) **Special Educational Needs:**

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for all Children with a Social Worker who have special educational needs and disabilities by ensuring:

- that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision (*in line with the SEND Code of Practice*)
- that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight
- with the school SENDCO, the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained.

#### 9) **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.

#### 10) **Suspensions and Exclusion:**

- we understand that our policy on behaviour concerns the conduct of staff and children alike.
- we understand that behaviour management is completely influenced by the relationships we foster between all adults and children who are part of this school, and that learning about behaviour regulation is taught as well as 'caught'
- 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 excluding a child with a Social Worker, 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. Before acting, we will always discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School.
- 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 only consider Permanent Exclusion from school as the last possible resort for Children Looked After and Previously Looked after recognising that entire living arrangements could be affected as a result.
- exclusion must be for as short a period as possible with the aim of improving outcomes for the child or young person. The time during and after the exclusion period will be used constructively to resolve the situation and ensure positive and appropriate support is in place for all.
- we will always contact The Virtual School for support to find an effective solution which best meets the needs of the child.
- we understand that 'where a looked-after child (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 59: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (publishing.service.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.

#### 11) Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will make every effort to develop positive professional relationships with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of all children with a social worker.

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After:

- Website: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool)
- Twitter: @VS\_HCC
- Email: [virtualschool@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@hertfordshire.gov.uk)
- Email for Virtual School Education Hub for Children with a Social Worker: [education.hub@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:education.hub@hertfordshire.gov.uk)
- Phone: 01992 556915