



# Southdown Primary School



## Children Looked After (CLA) Policy 2026

Chair of Governors: 	Headteacher: 
Ratified on: 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Review by: Summer Term 2029

# Southdown Primary School Children Looked After Policy

## 1. Introduction

### 1.2 Policy Development

This policy has been developed to align with Welsh Government's *'Making a Difference'* guidance for CLA (2024) and Flintshire County Councils Corporate Parenting Strategy.

This policy has been agreed by Southdown Primary School's Senior Leadership Team and Governing body and reflects up to date statutory requirements placed on the school through legislation and guidance.

### 1.3 School Commitment

Southdown Primary School is fully supportive of the Welsh Government 'Making a Difference' Guidance for CLA (2024) and FCC's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

At Southdown Primary School we believe that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful, and we aim to provide a learning environment in which every Child Looked After can thrive. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that our CLA can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Care experienced children and young people are not a homogeneous group but they are more likely to have experienced trauma in their lives, including abuse, neglect or loss. Care experienced children and young people may need support to overcome attachment difficulties which can affect the way they engage at school, including their concentration and behaviour. Providing children and young people with the right support will help them achieve their potential and make progress in the next steps of their life.

We are aware that some Children Looked After can experience significant disadvantage and may have specific difficulties in obtaining transport and attendance, completing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as possible stigma about their circumstances. We are committed to ensuring they reach their potential in all areas and to making appropriate adjustments in order to alleviate these barriers wherever possible.

We at Southdown Primary School are committed to improving outcomes for all Care Experienced children and young people by:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.
- Appointing a link Governor for CLA
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritizing 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 potential difficulties and educational disadvantages that may be experienced by Children Looked After.
- Developing a trauma informed ethos throughout the school.
- Producing a high quality, person-centred 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, the support they require and the additional interventions as required.
- Make best use of any additional funding, including CLA PDG to improve the educational experiences of CLA.
- Planning meaningful transitions, in advance where possible, and sharing all relevant information between settings.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

### 2.1 Definition

The definition of children looked after or looked after children (children in care) is found in the Social Services Wellbeing Act 2014 under section 74. A child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council’s children’s services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours. Children have said they prefer the term ‘Children looked after’ (CLA) so this is the terminology used in this policy by Flintshire County Council and its schools.

Care experienced children and young people are those who:

- have previously been looked after by the local authority (e.g. children who have been adopted; are in Special Guardianships arrangements or have returned after a period in care to their biological family) or;
- are currently being looked after by a local authority. This includes children in foster care, residential care, secure accommodation, kinship arrangements, hostels, or living independently under the supervision of social workers. At Southdown Primary School we work to ensure each individual learner can reach their full potential. All children and young people are entitled to learn, and all members of staff are entitled to work in an environment that is safe and secure.

### 2.2 Legislative Context

The Governing Body at Southdown Primary School will ensure they are fully aware of the relevant legislation and will have due regard for the following:

#### **Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008**

Section 20(1) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 states that a governing body of a maintained school must designate a member of the staff at the school (“the designated person”) as having responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of registered pupils at the school who are:

(a) currently being looked after, and

(b) fall within subsection (6) Section 20(5) defines a person looked after by the local authority for the purposes of subsection (1)(a). Section 20(6) (ba) states that the designated person also has responsibility for category 2 and category 3 young people within the meaning of section 104(2) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

## **The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (section 74) defines a child who is looked after by a local authority as a child who is:

- in its care, or
- provided with accommodation by the local authority, in the exercise of their social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) sets out the local authorities' duties in respect of 'care and support' planning for looked after and accommodated children.

The local authority's Part 6 'care and support plan' is the overarching plan for the looked after child, bringing together in one place all the key information relating to the child's developmental needs including:

- any other assessment of the child and their family
- the child's personal education plan, health plan and placement plan

The Part 6 Code also recognises the importance of stability in education. It provides that:

- when deciding where to place a looked after child, a local authority should do everything possible to minimise disruption to the child's education
- where a child is in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11), particular effort must be made to ensure that their education is not disrupted due to a placement move

This recognises that moving children in the middle of a GCSE course (or equivalent) may seriously damage their opportunity to gain:

- the qualifications they need to enter further or higher education
- employment

Part 6 of the Act also applies to asylum-seeking children, giving them the same rights and entitlements as any other child looked after.

The local authority should work in partnership with the child, the school (including the designated person), carers and families and other professionals to develop and review the Part 6 care and support plan so that it reflects fully the needs of the child, remains up to date and is implemented.

## **The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 (CPPCR)**

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 (CPPCR) also require the preparation of a:

- health plan for the child
- PEP for the child
- placement plan

These should all form an integral part of the overall Part 6 care and support plan for the child.

### **Corporate parenting charter**

The 'Corporate Parenting Charter: A Promise from Wales' sets out the shared principles all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services (including education) to care-experienced children and young people. This includes the following principle:

'A Good Education: We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn and develop and help them become who they want to be.'

The Welsh Government has published a corporate parenting toolkit, which:

- provides further information on the principles
- provides examples of how corporate parenting could be taken forward in an education setting
- will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect examples of good practice

The Corporate Parenting Charter is open to anyone to sign up to, including school settings and local authorities. We encourage everyone to become a corporate parent to care-experienced children and young people.

**Other relevant duties include:**

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ('the ALN Act')

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 Governing Body

Southdown Primary School's designated governor is Stephanie Griffiths-Gidman as Safeguarding Governor.

The governing body will

- Ensure the school has a coherent policy for CLA and regularly monitor the policy and its implementation.
- Agree the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Looked After Children
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Looked After Children. - How will this be done? Annual or termly report?
- Designate a member of staff in school as having lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of Care Experienced children and young people.
- Ensure the designated person has access to relevant advice and training.

### 3.2 Headteacher

Southdown Primary School's Headteacher is Miss Charlotte Luke

The head teacher will

- Be instrumental, alongside the Governing body, in the process of appointing a designated person for CLA within the school.
- Work with the LA to ensure that all necessary training is provided and allow sufficient time for staff to attend training as part of their CPD.
- Work alongside the designated person to ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of CLA/ Care experienced and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of CLA and Care Experienced to all parties involved.
- Ensure that any issues arising that might threaten the school placement are addressed without delay. All steps will be taken to prevent exclusion, including the implementation of pastoral support, referral for behaviour support and involvement of relevant FCC and external agencies.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

- Work positively and collaboratively with all relevant agencies and ensure that where communication difficulties arise with social workers or carers, contact is made with the LACE Coordinator.
- Work with Flintshire Local Authority to ensure that CLA PDG funding is used to good effect and has a positive impact on the wellbeing, or achievement of vulnerable and Care Experienced learners within the school.

### **3.3 Designated Person**

Southdown Primary School's designated person is Mrs Kirsten Bell

The Welsh Government Guidance says that the role of the designated person for looked after children should be afforded the same prominence in school as other key roles such as the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) and the designated senior person (DSP) for child protection.

Our Designated Teacher will work alongside the head teacher and governing body to:

- *Attend relevant training, and understand the care system and the emotional impact trauma and being in care can have on a child's educational outcomes.*
- *Keep knowledge and understanding up to date in order to respond to the specific learning needs of children looked-after.*
- *Liaise with the LACE and other relevant LA officers – including attendance at the Trauma Informed Practitioners network and the Forum for delegated Leads for CLA.*
- *Access the Flintshire online forum for CLA leads*
- *Raise awareness of the needs of Care Experienced pupils to contribute to the teaching and wider learning experiences of children in care through*
  - *undertaking discussions with the looked after child; and*
  - *having empathy with the complexity of the lives of looked after children*
  - *Having regular progress meetings with teachers and support staff.*
- *Ensure that staff, have relevant information/training, and positively promote the education of CLA*

Our designated teacher will also work alongside the head teacher, governing body and other relevant staff to ensure all of the appropriate planning and support (outlined below) is in place.

## **4. Planning and Support**

### **4.1 Admissions**

The School admissions code provides a summary of the statutory School Admissions Code, including provisions for the admission of children looked after and previously children looked after. In accordance with the Code and the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (Wales) Regulations 2009, admission authorities must give highest priority to looked after and previously looked after children within their oversubscription criteria. Where the number of applications exceeds the published admission number, these children must be ranked first.

At Southdown Primary School we agree to the above, and agree to work with the Local Authority Education department, social services and other relevant agencies to ensure smooth and efficient admissions arrangements are in place.

#### **4.2 Effective induction and transition arrangements**

- *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.*
- *Build relationships with health, education, social care partners and other partners so that they understand the support available to CLA.*
- *Ensure transition planning is in place for children moving between placements or phases of education.*
- *Ensure speedy transfer of information between the agencies and individuals.*

#### **4.3 Listening to the voice of the child:**

- *Ensure there is regular dialogue with the child to provide support in the school environment.*
- *Ensure the child is involved in, and contributes to their PEP.*
- *Understand the aspirations and what is 'important to' all pupils.*
- *Ensure all CLA have access to and support from one or more emotionally available key adults.*

#### **4.4 'Catch-up arrangements' where gaps in the child's education are identified and support for ALN.**

At Southdown Primary School we will identify gaps in a child's education and ensure access to interventions, Additional Learning Provision (ALP – where required) and pastoral support,

We will:

- *Ensure children looked after with additional learning or behavioural needs are referred to the Local Authority to identify and provide for their support needs.*
- *Ensure that each care experienced learner has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the designated person, but should be based on the child's own wishes.*
- *Ensure CLA are prioritised for small group support, catch up and other interventions as required.*
- *Provide access to, nurture and emotionally available adults and Young People's Counselling Service is available for Yr6 learners*
- *Use a trauma informed approach to supporting pupil's well-being and engagement*

#### **4.5 Encouraging engagement with after-school clubs, the school council or additional revision sessions**

- *Ensure Care Experienced pupils are encouraged to engage pupil leadership groups and with after school clubs.*

#### **4.6 Monitoring of attendance, assessment and achievement data:**

We, at Southdown Primary School will ensure there is access to current and accurate information on the children looked after on the school roll. This will include a list of all CLA and known Care Experienced learners and identification of the home LA. We will also record social worker and carer details and information relating to persons with whom the child should not have contact.

*We will collect, monitor and analyse the following data for all Care Experienced young people:*

- *Attendance half termly with schools Education Support Officer*
- *Wellbeing data collected annually*
- *Academic progress and attainment*

Should the pupil move to an alternative educational provision we will ensure speedy transfer of information between the agencies and individuals.

#### **4.7 Avoid the exclusion of care-experienced children and young people and ensure those at risk of exclusion are supported**

The exclusion from schools and pupil referral units guidance provides advice on:

- avoiding exclusions
- the process which must be followed when excluding learners from schools and PRUs
- the procedures for appealing against exclusion
- how to maintain the education of excluded learners.

At Southdown Primary School we will ensure that:

- *any issues threatening the school placement are addressed without delay (all steps should be taken to prevent exclusion, including the implementation of pastoral support, the ALN process and referrals to the relevant professionals such as the Education Welfare Service, LACE or Educational Psychology Service*
- *Exclusions will be carefully monitored*

## **5. Personal Education Plans (PEPS)**

**The designated person for CLA, alongside the headteacher and other school staff should also ensure that:**

- The PEP is completed by school WITHIN 20 SCHOOL DAYS of a pupil becoming Looked After or changing schools.
- The child's educational needs are identified in consultation with his/her teacher(s) to address them by setting realistic challenges and academic targets.
- A PEP is drawn up in partnership with the child, parent and/or relevant family member, carer, social worker and any other relevant person.
- The PEP is forwarded to IRO, social worker and LA Advisor who monitor completion.

- The PEP is available at the looked after children review meeting and sufficient time is allocated for the school to be represented at the looked after children's review.
- The PEP is kept by school, amended as needed & updated for forwarding to subsequent CLA reviews.
- All meetings for Children Looked After (for reasons related to their care circumstances) should be held outside of lesson times. If this is not possible an appropriate room should be provided to ensure privacy for the meeting.
- All meetings with looked after children only involve members of school staff who are absolutely critical to that meeting.
- Looked after children or PLAC are not exposed to disputes over finances and responsibilities in meetings.

### **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Impact Statement**

Southdown Primary School is committed to the protection and promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing of our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers. We recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. This Policy has been written and reviewed in line with our school's vision and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This policy has been quality impact assessed and we believe that it is line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote quality at Southdown Primary School.