



Children's Safeguarding and Social Work

Corporate Parenting Service

Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children: multi-agency guidance

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1 Introduction

1.1 Barriers to learning

For Looked After Children (CLA) and previously CLA, a positive school experience is one of the most important factors contributing to good outcomes in later life. However, these children traditionally have poorer educational outcomes than their peers and face many more barriers to educational achievement due to their experiences and circumstances.

- *Instability in their pre-care lives and their care experiences such as exclusion or frequent changes of placement may mean they spend a lot of time out of education.*
- *The emotional impact of being removed from home and placed with strangers and possibly changing school can mean children coming into care find it difficult to concentrate at school.*
- *As a result of this, they may fall behind on school work and sometimes, may not receive extra help and support to catch up.*
- *They often have unresolved physical, mental and emotional health problems and special educational needs that can impact on their academic performance.*
- *Pre-care experiences and disrupted care can make it difficult for children to build trusting relationships with adults, including teachers. This may have an impact on their behaviour at school and can make them more vulnerable to poor social interactions exclusion.*
- *Many CLA worry about the stigma of being “looked after” or “adopted” and having their status disclosed to others. They also report being singled out at school as being “different” and are more vulnerable to bullying.*
- *Foster carers, adoptive parents and special guardians may not be properly equipped or supported to provide encouragement to the child around their education, or feel able to take on the crucial role of advocating for the child and raising their aspirations as a good parent would do.*

This guidance has been written for professionals who are involved in the education of CLA and previously CLA and provides a framework for multi-agency working and service standards that can help these children achieve their potential and close the attainment gap with their peers.

1.2 Legal duties

Local authorities have a duty under the *Children Act 1989* to safeguard and promote the welfare of **looked after children (CLA)** and share a duty with relevant partner agencies to promote their educational achievement. This requires high standards of “corporate parenting” and care planning that shows a commitment to the child’s education by advocating for them and setting high aspirations for their future success.

Local authorities also have a duty to promote the education of **previously CLA (previously CLA)**, defined as children who have left the care system as a result of being adopted (including adopted from state care outside of England and Wales), or on becoming subject to a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order. Full details of how Camden will meet this duty can be found in section 3.

Key documents that set out the legal framework are:

- *The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and related statutory guidance*

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/care%20planning%20pCLAs%20and%20case%20review%20regulations%20england%202010.pdf>

- *Promoting the education of looked after children statutory guidance 2018*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

- *The designated teacher for looked after and previously CLA;; statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities 2018*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

1.3 Aim and scope of this guidance

Camden aims to support CLA and previously CLA to achieve their potential by ensuring they have the same access to educational opportunities as their peers and that their status does not negatively impact on their learning.

The policy sets out how the Virtual School Head (VSH), social workers, education professionals, foster carers, schools and others will work together to provide:

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- strong care planning processes and stable placements that promote the child's education, high expectations for their success, and good standards of care and support that help children to do well;
- a framework for assessing educational need, tracking progress, setting targets and monitoring educational outcomes for all CLA;
- a Personal Education Plan that all stakeholders are involved in developing and implementing and that details the support to be made available to the child to help them achieve their potential;
- good provision of education and school admission policies that prioritise CLA, and exclusion policies that are sensitive to their unique circumstances;
- continued support for the child's education once they leave the care system.

The policy applies to all CLA and previously CLA up to the age of 18, regardless of their current care status and including CLA placed outside Camden or previously CLA attending school in Camden.

2 Promoting the education of looked after children

Please note that this section only applies to children who are currently CLA.

2.1 Corporate parenting

Corporate parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility that local authorities and partner agencies hold for ensuring that children's' experience of being in care matches the standards and quality of care that children living at home would receive from their parents, so that they have the same life-chances as any other child.

The Camden standard of "corporate parenting"

- *Where possible, children entering the care system will remain at their current school where this is practicable and consistent with their welfare; if this is not possible, another suitable school place will be identified within 20 days of them becoming looked after.*

- *Every effort will be made to ensure that CLA receive a place at the best school for them. Only schools that have an OFSTED rating of good or outstanding will be considered.*
- *All CLA will have a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) that sets out their aspirations, sets targets for their attainment and details what support they will receive in order to achieve their potential. The process of PEP planning will be initiated within 10 days of the child becoming looked after.*
- *Foster carers and professionals will have high expectations for the educational attainment of CLA who will be encouraged to aspire as high as possible.*
- *Special consideration will be given to more vulnerable CLA, for example those placed outside Camden or who have special educational needs or disabilities.*
- *Decisions on the child's education will be a key element of care planning and disruption of education will be kept to a minimum by promoting placement stability, especially during Years 6, 10 and 11.*
- *All CLA will have a suitable education provision, from early years upwards, and will be actively supported to continue to further education and training.*
- *CLA who are going on to higher education will receive the Higher Education Bursary.*
- *CLA will be encouraged and supported to take part in positive activities outside of school and to pursue their interests where possible.*
- *All CLA will be supported to achieve high levels of school attendance and punctuality so that they can succeed academically.*

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

All agencies and professionals involved in the education of CLA have a responsibility to ensure they meet the following standards of corporate parenting:

- acting in the best interest of the child and promoting their physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- encouraging them to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- taking into account their views, wishes and feelings;

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- helping them to gain access to and make best use of services provided by the local authority and relevant partners;
- promoting high aspirations and seeking to secure the best outcomes for them;
- for children to be safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education or work;
- preparing them for adulthood and independence.

Senior leadership for CLA (which includes the Corporate Parenting Board, the Cabinet member for children, the Executive Director for Supporting People and the Director of Children's Safeguarding and Social Work) have key responsibility for ensuring that the council discharges all its duties to CLA as a corporate parent so that:

- everyone has high aspirations for them and that their education is valued and prioritised;
- they have access to high quality educational placements that are well resourced and supported;
- there are robust systems in place via the Virtual School and the VSH to monitor their educational achievement;
- CLA are able to raise issues regarding their education through the Children in Care Council.

Camden's Virtual School head (VSH) is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the educational progress of CLA in the borough, including those placed by other authorities, by:

- keeping a roll of all CLA at school or college in the borough and informing schools of any CLA who is added to the school roll;
- having an overview of the PEP system;
- raising awareness of the importance of the education of CLA with relevant agencies;
- promoting a culture whereby the child's views on their education are actively sought and taken into account;
- providing advice to social workers, schools and carers on the education of CLA;
- reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board on the educational progress of CLA.

School governors have a duty to ensure there is a good framework of support for CLA within the school by appointing a suitably qualified designated teacher and that they receive the support needed to carry out this role effectively.

The designated teacher for CLA should promote a culture of high aspirations for CLA within the school and ensure staff have a good understanding of the specific educational needs of CLA and the barriers they face. The designated teacher will:

- provide a point of contact and source of information and advice to staff around care planning and the PEP process;
- contribute to the development and review of school policies in order to ensure that CLA are not disadvantaged by their status;
- help CLA to take responsibility for their education by discussing targets and support with them and ensuring they take part in the PEP process;
- liaise with social workers and the Virtual School regarding individual children around their PEP and any associated issues with their learning. The use of their pupil premium plus will be agreed at PEP meetings;
- provide advice to staff so that they can assess children's preferred learning styles and consider appropriate teaching strategies for CLA;
- liaise with carers to support home learning;
- oversee transitions to and from the school and ensure the transfer of information to the child's next school;
- support a multi-agency planning process during the transition from primary to secondary school and from secondary to college;
- liaise with the designated safeguarding lead to ensure any safeguarding concerns about CLA are dealt with efficiently;
- ensure the VSH is aware of any behavioural concerns or risks of exclusion or attendance issues in a timely manner;
- provide the looked after child's educational data and school reports as requested by the VSH.

CSSW will ensure that all CLA have an allocated **social worker** who will carry out all statutory care planning processes and who will be responsible for ensuring provision of a suitable school place and initiating and reviewing the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP).

CSSW will also appoint an **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)** to provide independent oversight and scrutiny of decisions made by CSSW about looked after children's care and education. The IRO will ensure that suitable arrangements for the child's education are in place and that the child has a high quality PEP that provides a clear framework for their educational achievement and which is considered at every statutory CLA review.

The **Fostering Service and Resources team** will ensure that CLA have a stable placement and that their carers are supported to work jointly with schools, social workers and the VSH to promote the education of CLA.

Parents should be consulted on their child's education and encouraged to take part in the PEP process where this is in the child's interest. Often parents have vital information about the child's academic history and abilities, and in many cases the child will return to their care so they will need to be able to continue supporting their education.

Looked after children should be encouraged and enabled to take up all educational opportunities available to them and should be fully involved in care planning and the PEP process so that their views can be taken into account. CLA should also have an opportunity to join the Children in Care Council so that they can advocate for the education of CLA.

2.3 Care planning

Social workers have the main responsibility for care planning, and education will be a key element of this but social workers will need to work jointly with carers, the VSH and schools to ensure the following:

- All care planning decisions, including placement choice, will take the child's education into account. Decisions on the child's educational provision will be based on a thorough assessment of their needs and a place in the most suitable mainstream school will be sought unless the child has specific needs that can only be met within specialist provision.
- Where possible, children coming into the care system will remain at their original school and placement decisions will be based on this if it is in the child's best interests. For CLA in Key Stage 4, everything possible will be done to maintain their school place and no change in schooling will take place unless it is necessary and in their best interests.
- Placements that are threatened with breakdown will be supported where this is in the child's best interests in order to ensure educational stability and continuity.

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- If a child needs to change school places on becoming looked after or following a placement change, social workers and foster carers will work together with the VSH to ensure a new school place is found before the placement takes effect or within **20 days** for emergency placements. No placement change will be authorised unless it can be demonstrated that the impact on the child's education has been considered.
- Where possible, practical help, for example transport, will be provided to enable a child to remain at their school.
- All school-age children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is integral to their care plan and which is reviewed and revised regularly within the statutory framework. Under 5s will have an early years PEP that sets out their pre-school learning provision.
- Care planning processes will focus on the present and future educational needs of the child and will set out long-term goals and aspirations. Transitions between schools will be carefully managed within the care planning process.

2.4 Access to school places

When seeking a school place, social workers and foster carers will seek advice from the VSH and research schools in the area before deciding which is most likely to meet the child's needs. Schools must have a good or outstanding OFSTED rating to be considered.

Social workers and foster carers are responsible for making applications to schools and admissions authorities but the VSH should liaise with other local authorities where a place is being sought for a child placed out of borough.

All admissions to schools are governed by the Schools Admissions code of practice (link below). CLA should be given the highest priority for school places where a school is oversubscribed.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmissions/a00195/current-codes-and-regulations>

Applications for Camden schools should be made via the Schools Admissions team (see link below). Applications for Camden schools should be sent to Camden's Schools Admissions service and to the relevant local authority where the child is placed outside Camden.

[Schools admissions - Camden Council](#)

Where a school place is being sought outside of the normal admissions round (ie; during the school year) CLA should be offered a place by a school whenever requested. If a primary school place is being sought and admission would mean the class would go over the statutory limit, the child may still be given a place as an excepted child except in the case of nursery or reception classes.

Advice can be sought from the VSH on what action to take if a place is refused. Camden may be able to direct a school or other local authority to offer the child a place under the Schools Admissions code and this process will be co-ordinated by the VSH. Schools and admissions authorities cannot refuse to admit a looked after child or refer them for action under the Fair Access Protocol because of their challenging behaviour.

2.5 Monitoring attendance and attainment

2.5.1 Attendance

Good rates of school attendance are an expectation for all CLA and the Virtual School keeps records of attendance. Foster carers will be expected to ensure all CLA in their care attend school regularly and will be supported to achieve this by the CLA social worker and the supervising social worker. The designated teacher will also ensure records are kept on attendance and any problems are reported to the social worker and the VSH.

2.5.2 Monitoring and setting targets

The Virtual School keeps a record of the attendance and attainment of all Camden's looked after children and the schools they attend in order to continually monitor their progress.

The VSH and Virtual School consultants help schools, social workers and foster carers to set specific learning targets for individual looked after children at each key stage and longer term plans for education, training and employment. These targets are recorded on the child's PEP and monitored via the PEP process.

The VSH will also ensure that all CLA have a high quality PEP in place that will be effective in recording the child's progress and achievement and contains short and long term SMART targets to support the child's education.

2.5.3 Attendance panel

Some CLA may face additional problems that can impact adversely on their education. Where issues such as poor attendance, exclusion, lack of a suitable school place or health problems are stopping a child from engaging in education and making the most of their opportunities, they will be discussed at the multi-agency Attendance Panel in order to consider what support and services can be put in place to address issues.

2.6 Personal education plans (PEPs)

2.6.1 Policy

- PEPs are the main mechanism for monitoring and improving the educational attainment of CLA. It is a record of personalised learning that sets out in detail the child's educational record and future aspirations. The PEP can be used by the school as a tool to set out clear targets and long-term goals and how these will be achieved.
- The PEP is an integral part of the child's care plan and subject to the same assessment, planning and review processes. The PEP will be developed and regularly reviewed at specialist PEP meetings and made available to the statutory CLA review to ensure the child's education and their attainment is monitored and reviewed.
- Every CLA in Camden up to the age of 18 will have a PEP in place by the time of the first statutory CLA review. This includes CLA who are permanently excluded, without a school place or in custody or secure accommodation. Early years provision for the under 5s will be detailed in a PEP.
- The initial PEP will be available for consideration at the child's first statutory CLA review but will then be fully developed with the full PEP available for the second statutory CLA review.
- The PEP will be initiated by the social worker and the PEP meeting will be led by the designated teacher in partnership with social workers, carers and the Virtual School who will provide specialist advice and assessment through the key stage consultants and the VSH.
- If the child is subject to any other educational plan, for example an Education, Health and Care Plan, this will be incorporated into the PEP.

- Planning for the child's long-term future and identification of their long-term goals and aspirations will take place from the age of 13 (Year 8).

2.6.2 Developing the PEP

- CSSW will notify schools and the Virtual School of all children who become looked after.
- Social workers will initiate the PEP process within 10 working days of the child becoming looked after and will contact the designated teacher at the child's school and the VSH to make arrangements for a PEP meeting where the plan will be developed.
- Schools and social workers will record information about the looked after child's details, educational needs, attendance, behaviour and academic achievement in the ePEP, which is available to the designated teacher and social worker on a secure ePEP server.
- Social work contributions to the ePEP will be based on assessment and focus on the child's educational history and social and emotional factors affecting their education. Social workers will obtain the views of the child, their parents and their foster carer. The social worker's contribution should also focus on the level of disruption of the child's schooling pre-care.
- School and Virtual School contributions will focus on the child's educational needs, abilities, attainment and progress. Specialist assessment will be commissioned where required.
- A PEP meeting will be held each school term (or 3 times a year). The meeting will be attended by:
 - the child (where appropriate)
 - their social worker
 - their foster carer
 - the designated teacher/SENCo or Head of Year
 - their parents (where appropriate).
- Designated teachers will record the decisions of the meeting on the child's ePEP. The social workers and the child will complete their relevant sections and this will be sent through to the Virtual School consultants for quality assurance and distribution.

- The Virtual School consultants will ensure there is a consistent approach to all PEPs and that the PEP contains relevant information and SMART targets that continue to meet the child's educational needs.

2.6.3 Reviewing the PEP

Once a PEP has been put in place for a child, it will need to be reviewed at a PEP meeting every term and as part of the child's care plan at each statutory CLA review. The PEP review should also look at how the pupil premium plus (which is held by the Virtual School) and other additional funding has been used to support the targets set out in the PEP.

Where there are significant changes to the child's education, such as a permanent exclusion or change of school, these should be reported to the IRO. At this point a PEP meeting needs to be convened in order to ensure the child's educational needs are being met. The Virtual School can support with this.

PEP checklist

The following basic information needs to be included on the child's PEP:

- *the child's educational history, previous schools attended and levels of pre-care disruption to schooling, record of attendance and behaviour;*
- *the child's academic achievements, barriers to learning and any support provided or desired;*
- *the child's current and expected level of attainment at key stages;*
- *the current school provision and any specialist support they are receiving under other plans;*
- *any arrangements in place if the child has to change schools, including how disruption will be kept to a minimum;*
- *the child's leisure interests;*
- *how carers or key workers will support the child's education and achievement and help them to pursue leisure interests.*

The following areas need to be considered at the PEP meeting and details of actions needed to address the issues and achieve short term and long term goals recorded in the PEP, including details of who is responsible for what tasks and in what timescale;

- *access to early years provision (where appropriate);*
- *planning provision where a child is out of school;*
- *re-integration plans for those returning to the school environment after an absence;*
- *transition plans for those children who are changing schools;*
- *short term academic targets and objectives and how these are linked to longer-term aspirations;*
- *how the child will be supported to pursue leisure interests and out of hours learning;*
- *action around improving attendance or behaviour;*
- *specific interventions for accelerated progress where the child has fallen behind;*
- *use of one-to-one tutoring where the child would benefit from this kind of additional support;*
- *use of the pupil premium plus to provide extra help;*
- *specific actions for social workers, foster carers, keyworkers or the school (above their normal responsibilities) to promote attendance, home learning, independent activities or supporting the attendance of college open days or applications.*

2.7 Pupil premium plus

The pupil premium plus provides local authorities with extra funding in order to help narrow the attainment gap between CLA and their peers. The scheme is administered by the VSH who will identify the educational needs of Camden's CLA and decide, in consultation with the school, how the funds would be best used to improve their educational outcomes.

Details of how the funding is used and how payments are managed by the VSH is set out in the pupil premium plus policy available at:
<https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/education/services-for-children-and-parents/camden-la-support-services/virtual-school-for-looked-after-children.en?page=7#section-7>

The outcomes of interventions funded by the pupil premium plus and evidence of these outcomes are reviewed at each CLA's PEP meeting and statutory CLA review and should be included in the VSH annual report to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The pupil premium plus may be used to support the education of individual children or in a more strategic way to target specific groups of CLA or improve specific educational outcomes amongst all CLA. The VSH will seek the views of foster carers, designated teachers and social workers in order to make informed decisions on how the funding should be used.

2.8 Supporting care leavers

Leaving Care staff will continue to support care leavers to do well in education and to help them plan for their longer term goals such as going on to further or higher education, vocational training or apprenticeships.

Young people will have a PEP up to the age of 18 that will be an integral part of their pathway plan and will be reviewed alongside the pathway plan. The PEP will also record details of any financial support for the young person from the 16-19 Bursary Fund or any other form of financial support from Camden to support the young person in higher and further education.

Social workers and personal advisors working with care leavers will ensure they are able to access bursaries and that they receive all the financial and other support to maintain their PEP and take up all opportunities for education, training and employment.

Beyond 18, the pathway plan will contain details of how Camden will maintain and support care leavers going on to further and higher education, training and employment. The VSH will continue to liaise with personal advisors in the CLA and Leaving Care service in order to ensure on-going support to care leavers around their education and training, with advice available from the post 16 manager for Education Employment and Training.

2.9 CLA in the criminal justice system

When young people become involved in the criminal justice system, their looked after status may change and this will affect the manner in which their education is planned for.

- All young people who are remanded into local authority accommodation will become looked after and should have a care plan and a PEP in line with care planning regulations.

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- All young people who are remanded into youth detention accommodation (for example a secure children's home or secure training centre) will become looked after and will have a detention placement plan which includes how their educational needs will be met whilst on remand.
- CLA who are subject to care orders and who receive a custodial sentence will remain looked after and will continue to have a PEP.
- CLA who were accommodated voluntarily immediately prior to receiving a custodial sentence will not remain looked after but will be entitled to an assessment to:
 - look at whether their educational needs are being met within the secure establishment
 - plan for their continued care, accommodation and education on release.

CSSW will make arrangements for a social worker to liaise with the secure establishment in order to carry out this assessment.

Social workers and the Virtual School will work in partnership with the Youth Offending Service to make suitable arrangements for the education of young people whilst on remand and in custody and also that resettlement plans include a plan for their education once they are released if they are to remain looked after.

The Virtual School will be informed of:

- all young people who become looked after following remand
- any CLA receiving custodial sentences
- the release date of any young person leaving custody who will be looked after on release.

2.10 CLA placed out of borough

In general, Camden aims to place all CLA with Camden foster carers but this may not always be possible and some children may have to be placed out of Camden for their own safety and welfare and may have to attend a non-Camden school.

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If this is the case, social workers and the VSH will work closely with the foster carer to ensure that the host local authority are aware of the placement and that a suitable school place is made available for the child.

CSSW will ensure that statutory notifications of out of borough placements are sent to the education department of receiving local authorities as a child is placed, and this will be followed up by the VSH in order to agree education provision for the child.

Social workers and the VSH will work closely with the designated CLA teacher for the school to ensure that they are aware of Camden's policies regarding promoting the education of CLA and that the PEP process is implemented in full.

2.11 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

It is Camden's policy that all UASC will become looked after immediately following their arrival in Camden and receive the same standard of services as all CLA. Children who have travelled to the UK to seek asylum will face many additional challenges with regard to their education, for example they may have had limited access to education in their state of origin and may speak little or no English.

In order to meet the specific needs of UASC, the VSH will:

- ensure that any UASC under 16 is found a suitable school placement that has an ESOL provision, where available;
- ensure that any UASC over 16 (Year 12 and above) are supported in finding a suitable college provision;
- inform the Camden School Inclusion Team (or the equivalent in the relevant host borough) of the young person;
- explore the feasibility of English support (tuition or IT programmes) to help the young person in adapting to their new environment;
- support the young person's social worker, foster carer or keyworker so that they are able to provide the young person with new opportunities and activities for new experiences that will enrich both their education and their daily lives.

3 Promoting the education of previously CLA

3.1 Description of the duty

Local authorities have a duty to promote the education of previously CLA by providing information and advice to their carers, early years providers and designated teachers in schools and anyone else involved in their education that the authority feels should be included in this duty. This is to acknowledge the fact that these children are likely to need help to make the most of educational opportunities once they leave the care system.

Previously CLA are defined as children who have left the care system as a result of being adopted (including adopted from state care outside of England and Wales), or on becoming subject to a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order.

Support should be available from the point that the child is eligible for free early years provision and throughout the compulsory years of education. The duty is owed to any previously CLA attending state educational provision in Camden regardless of where they live.

3.2 Role of the VSH

The Virtual School head is responsible for carrying out the duty on behalf of Camden and together with the CSSW Director will ensure that provision is in place to:

- respond to any requests from parents for information and advice on their children's education such as Camden's admissions process, and where appropriate signpost parents to other services and support;
- respond to requests from schools, nurseries and providers of alternative provision for advice and information on promoting the education of previously CLA;
- develop good working relationships with professionals involved in the education of previously CLA, including schools (via the designated CLA teacher), early years settings, voluntary groups and social workers in the Adoption and Permanence teams responsible for providing advice on post-adoption and special guardianship support;

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- provide general advice and information to schools and early years settings that raises awareness of the needs of previously CLA, encouraging high aspirations and promoting good practice for working with children and their families;
- provide guidance to schools and early years settings on the best use of the pupil premium plus to promote the education of previously CLA;
- liaise with the Adoption and Permanence team to ensure that social workers can advise parents and carers on the support available from the VSH;
- liaise with Camden's Training and Development Service to commission suitable training for professionals with responsibility for promoting the education of previously CLA.

However, as Camden will no longer be a corporate parent to these children, their progress will not be monitored by the Virtual School and if any extra support is to be provided, schools and early years settings must liaise with parents to gain consent.

3.3 Role of schools

School governors will be responsible for appointing a designated teacher who will promote the education of previously CLA in the same manner as for CLA. This means encouraging high expectations and helping staff understand the challenges faced by this cohort.

The designated teacher will also be the point of contact for parents and carers of previously CLA, linking with the VSH to provide advice and information and signposting on to suitable resources.

Schools will hold pupil premium plus funds on behalf of previously CLA attending their school and this will be administered by the designated teacher.

4 Promoting the education of CLA and previously CLA

4.1 Mental health

CLA and previously CLA are more likely than their peers to have experienced problems with their mental health and wellbeing that can have a negative effect on their behaviour and their ability to learn.

The VSH and designated teachers will:

- ensure that teaching staff are able to identify mental health difficulties and attachment issues and understand how this can impact on learning;
- signpost teaching staff to suitable mental health services so that the child can be assessed and supported;
- forge links with CAMHS and mental health services to promote partnership working;
- encourage the use of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs) for CLA to help carers and schools to assess the state of a child's mental health or wellbeing;
- provide information and advice to parents and carers of previously CLA.

4.2 Exclusions

CLA and previously CLA are more likely to exhibit behaviours that may lead to exclusion, but are more adversely affected by exclusion than their peers. Schools should take the child's past experiences into account and ensure that the school behavioural policies do not disadvantage CLA and previously CLA.

For CLA, statutory guidance places a duty on schools to work closely with the VSH, social workers and foster carers to support the child and as far as possible avoid exclusion.

Whenever a looked after child is at risk of exclusion or is given a fixed term exclusion, the designated teacher should notify the VSH who should liaise with schools, carers and social workers to identify what support can be put in place to enable the child to remain at the school.

Where a looked after child has been permanently excluded, the VSH should liaise with the school, carers and social workers to ensure that the child's PEP is reviewed and that alternative provision is in place. The IRO should also consider bringing forward the child's statutory CLA review.

Where there is a fixed period exclusion, the designated teacher will link with the VSH, the social worker and foster carer to arrange alternative education provision and discuss a suitable reintegration plan for when the child returns.

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Where there is a permanent exclusion, social workers and foster carers should take advice from the VSH with regards to using the appeals process to try to overturn the decision. The school will be responsible for providing work for the child for the first 5 days but then the local authority will be responsible for providing a new school pCLAE.

If there are concerns about a **previously looked after child** being excluded, the VSH and designated teacher should discuss this with parents and carers to identify strategies to avoid exclusion.

4.3 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

CLA and previously CLA are more likely to be identified as having special educational needs than their peers and some may have complex health needs and disabilities affecting their education, so it is important that their needs are identified and acted on as soon as possible to ensure they receive the right kind of support. Some may have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

The VSH should ensure that social workers, IROs, SENDCos and designated teachers follow the SEND code of practice so that:

- the EHC plan compliments the child's care plan and PEP;
- if the child receives extra support from the school, this is recorded in the PEP;
- all relevant information is made available for the EHC assessment;
- any review of the EHC plan coincides with the statutory CLA review of the child's care plan and their PEP.

If a child is identified as having special educational needs, the child will need to be referred to Camden's Special Educational Needs team for assessment by their parent or social worker (or to the SEND team in the local authority where a looked after child is placed out of borough).

Where a **looked after child** who has an EHC plan is placed outside of Camden, the social worker and VSH should ensure that they have information on the local SEND offer. The VSH and Camden's SEND team will make arrangements for the plan to be "transferred" to the receiving authority, which will maintain the plan but will be able to claim reimbursement from Camden as the placing authority.

If a receiving authority carries out an assessment on a Camden child placed in their borough and implements an EHC plan, that borough will be responsible for maintaining the plan.

CLA education multi-agency guidance

However, Camden will remain responsible for the child's overall education as corporate parent and social workers, foster carers and the VSH should continue to advocate for the child during any EHC assessment or review of the EHC plan.

For **previously CLA**, the SENDCo and designated teacher should liaise with parents and carers when considering support for the child or where the child will be referred to the SEND team for assessment.

The SEND code of practice is available at: [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - Publications - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25-years)

4.4 Early Years provision

It is essential that young children get the best start in life and for CLA and previously CLA, good early years provision can help to alleviate some of the negative aspects of pre-care experiences and prepare them for formal education.

- All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to free early years provision of 15 hours a week up to 570 hours in the year. Provision may be a nursery place or other early years setting.
- Looked after children aged 2 year olds will also be entitled to targeted provision of between 10 to 15 hours per week.

For CLA, early years provision should be discussed with foster carers so that they can make decisions on the best local provision for that child. This should be agreed at the statutory CLA review and recorded in the child's PEP.

For **previously CLA**, the VSH can provide information and advice to parents and carers on suitable early years provision in Camden and can signpost them to Camden's Family Information Service to find out about a child's entitlement to early years provision and details of what provision is available.

4.5 Recording and information sharing

The Virtual School will keep a central record of the following information for CLA:

- a roll of all Camden's looked after children
- the schools they attend
- levels of attendance
- levels of attainment and expected attainment at each Key Stage

CLA education multi-agency guidance

- whether the child has an up to date PEP.

The Virtual School will also keep records on any previously looked after child attending school in Camden.

This information will only be shared in accordance with the information sharing guidance provided by the Department for Education and the GDPR.

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00807-2008BKT-EN-March09.pdf>

4.5.1 Looked after children

Although it is crucial that everyone working with CLA should be able to share information in order to support multi-agency working, integrated service delivery and smooth transitions, the status of CLA is sensitive and information about them should be shared only with those agencies and individuals who need to know.

- All agencies will keep separate records for the child but will share important information with their colleagues in the professional network in the spirit of the information sharing guidance above.
- Information on the education of CLA held by CSSW is kept on the child's electronic case record (MOSAIC) which is accessible only by allocated social workers and their manager and key staff in the Virtual School.
- CSSW will send out notifications to all statutory agencies in Camden and in other boroughs of any placement made. CSSW will keep central records of all CLA and will endeavour to ensure the integrity of this data.
- Information relating to the child's PEP will be shared between CSSW, the Virtual School, the designated teacher and foster carers in order to ensure a multi-agency approach to the PEP process.
- Designated teachers will take care to ensure information sharing with colleagues within the school maintains the looked after child's confidentiality and will share relevant information as required to implement the child's PEP.
- Designated teachers will also share relevant information with designated teachers at other schools in order to support smooth transitions between schools.

CLA education multi-agency guidance

- Information sharing will be carried out in a “safe” manner using secure electronic systems and email addresses and using password protected files where necessary.

4.5.2 Previously CLA

The Adoption and Permanence team is responsible for ensuring the adoptive parents and special guardians of children leaving the care system are made aware of what information will be shared by the VSH with the child’s school or education provision, particularly if the child will change provision. All information sharing will be lawful and follow the spirit of the GDPR.