



Children and Young People who are Looked After Policy



Ysgol Y Berllan Deg

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'We owe it to all young people to give them the best chance to succeed in life. This is especially true of children that, often for no fault of their own, have found themselves placed in the most challenging of circumstances.'

Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills (February 2015).

Objectives:

- raise the educational aspirations of looked after children, adopted pupils, and those who care for them;
- consolidate accountability and leadership across our cluster;
- ensure that education continues to be a priority even during unfortunate periods in a child's life;
- make better use of data to help practice, shape and monitor educational policies or outcomes;
- promote and share good practice.

Definition of CLA (CYPLA)

The term "in care" was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (where the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person with parental responsibility) or who are the subject of care (where a court order gives a local parental responsibility to the local authority in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child). Children in both cases could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents in part or full time.

In addition, the term "in care", which is widely used in social services, constitutes the term "in public care", adopted by the DfES in their publication, "Education People Young People in Public Care ".

We also consider the following as CLA children:

- adopted children
- previously looked after children
- special arrangements
- children subject to safeguarding processes

Bro Edern Cluster Commitment:

Helping a CLA pupil to succeed and provide opportunities that enable them to get a better future is a key priority in our cluster. This is designed to:

- have high expectations for the child and ensure equal access and opportunities to participate fully in a balanced and broad education with extra-curricular activities and the opportunity to fully enjoy the school experience in line with the principles of corporate parenting;
- prioritize the recording and monitoring of the CLA pupil's academic achievement in addition to their health and wellbeing;
- maximize the stability and continuity of staffing and friendship groups as much as possible;
- prioritize reduction in exclusions and promote attendance and punctuality;
- promote inclusion by challenging attitudes and stereotypes and by promoting an inclusive climate;
- promote good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listen to the child;
- maintain and respect the child's confidentiality wherever possible and ensure sensitivity in referring to the status of a child's care and showing consideration to the background of looked after children, particularly around the weight of stress that is on a family;
- ensure that staff are aware and sensitive to the educational difficulties and disadvantages of a CLA pupil;
- ensure that an appropriate Designated Teacher is appropriately appointed and trained;
- draw up a Personal Education Plan (PEP) between the School, the child and the child's social worker, who will identify the child's individual needs alongside the support and resources they need;
- regularly review all school policies taking into account the LEA's Social Inclusion advice, Special Educational Needs Legislation, the Welsh Government and the Department for Education and Skills / Department of Health on Education for Children in Public Care;
- ensure that there is a clear protocol for sharing information within the schools and with external agencies and when transferring to the secondary school;
- try to support all looked after children educated at this school in order to support them to fulfill their academic potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Bodies will ensure that:

- the cluster has a coherent policy for CLA;
- the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the cluster taking account of the social inclusion guidelines and Welsh Government and UK Government guidelines and legislation;
- that the designated teachers have received appropriate training;
- Teachers are aware of their role;
- CLA pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum;

Headteachers of the schools will:

- appoint the designated teacher;
- ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training;
- oversee the development of the Policy on CLA pupils;
- be responsible for systems to support CLA;
- report to the Governing Body annually on the following:
 - the number of CLAs in the School;
 - analysis of test scores as a separate group *, compared to other pupils;
 - pupil attendance compared to other pupils;
 - the level of fixed-term and permanent exclusions compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints.

Designated Teacher

At Ysgol Y Berllan Deg the headteacher is the designated teacher. The designated teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos of children looked after by:

- serve as the link for Social Services;
- maintain and respect the confidentiality of all looked after children and ensure that information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis;
- ensure that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the educational difficulties and disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, maintaining high expectations for their educational achievements;

- Act as an advocate for looked after children to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions that affect future life chances.

The designated teacher will establish systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children and will:

- keep an overview and co-ordinate the collection of and maintaining all information about CLA pupils;
- keep records about CLA pupils, including legal status and information about who to contact about issues related to the child;
- establish a system for linking and transferring educational records to new schools to facilitate smooth and fast transfer;
- monitor the educational progress of all CLA pupils and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies where appropriate, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern.

The designated teacher will facilitate effective communication through:

- fostering positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular dialogue opportunities;
- be progressive and participate in setting goals for the child's PEP;
- play an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and / or written reports is provided to all statutory reviews of CLA;
- help co-ordinate education and PEP meetings;
- serve as the named contact for colleagues in Social Services and Education;
- ensure effective communication between all relevant stakeholders;
- Invite the responsible social worker to every meeting and contact this social worker regarding the child's PEP review.

The designated teacher will monitor the achievement of each child and ensure that they have the support needed in the school by:

- meeting with the CLA pupils to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role;
- ensure that every child has a named member of staff who can give advice and / or practical help on academic or pastoral issues;
- work with social services to ensure that all children have a PEP;
- ask for support from the ALNCo and / or external agencies;

- work closely with the ALNCo to ensure that all CLA pupils with additional learning needs are assessed and receive appropriate resources to support their learning;
- implement a strategy for transition between key stages or transferring to a new school;
- ensure that all CLA pupils are made to feel part of the school environment.

Personal Education Plans

Each child will have a PEP. Their social worker will be leading the work in creating and reviewing the document. However, the role of the school in this plan is essential and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to create and review the PEP. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- the strengths of the child and the areas for development;
- their interests, both inside and outside the School;
- the pupil's developmental, educational and pastoral needs alongside future plans and how these can be supported;
- issues that arise in the life of the child;
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

Admissions and Induction Arrangements

CLA children are a priority for the LEA when considering admission to school and the school will follow the LEA's official criteria.

Once admitted to school, the child will meet the designated teacher. They will discuss any relevant, academic or pastoral issues, and ensure that the child settles in school. Records are requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable, a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new PEP and ensure that communication systems are established early.

At the first PEP meeting, the social worker will inform the school of who requests school reports and the official documents of the school, and who can grant permission for school trips or such activities. At this meeting, any means of communication will be discussed and agreed to assist the exchange of manageable information between statutory meetings to provide details of any sudden changes in the child's circumstances.

School Trips and Special Activities

The school will pay attention to the possibility there could be delay in receiving parental permission for school trips and activities, the school will aim to ensure that CLA pupils enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities with other children by allocating placements to them on trips or on activities.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or the policy, they should raise it in the first case with the designated teacher who will try to resolve the situation. If the problem is not resolved then the school's grievance procedures can be followed.