

Ormiston Academies Trust

## Ormiston Meridian Academy

### Looked after and previously looked after children policy

#### Policy version control

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## 1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1. Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after and previously CLA are of real concern. Children who are looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation.
- 1.2. Ormiston Meridian Academy endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention, for all our children.
- 1.3. With this in mind, we aim to:
  - 1.3.1. Encourage children to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social, and emotional development.
  - 1.3.2. Ensure that children enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
  - 1.3.3. Plan support for CLA realistically and using the academy's resources efficiently to ensure the academy meets their needs.
  - 1.3.4. Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
  - 1.3.5. Help children develop their cultural, moral, and social understanding.

## 2. Legal framework

- 2.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - 2.1.1. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
  - 2.1.2. Children Act 1989
  - 2.1.3. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
  - 2.1.4. Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
  - 2.1.5. Children and Young Persons Act 2008
  - 2.1.6. Children and Families Act 2014
  - 2.1.7. Children and Social Work Act 2017
  - 2.1.8. DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
  - 2.1.9. DfE (2023) 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'

2.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies and documents:

- 2.2.1. Admissions policy
- 2.2.2. Anti-bullying policy
- 2.2.3. Behaviour policy
- 2.2.4. Child protection and safeguarding policy
- 2.2.5. Equality and diversity policy
- 2.2.6. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1. CLA are defined as:

- 3.1.1. Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- 3.1.2. Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- 3.1.3. Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, as the LA has parental responsibility.
- 3.1.4. Children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

#### 3.2. Previously-CLA are defined as:

- 3.2.1. Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements order.
- 3.2.2. Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

#### 4.1. The governing body is responsible for:

- 4.1.1. Ensuring the academy has a coherent policy for CLA and previously-CLA.
- 4.1.2. Reviewing the academy's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- 4.1.3. Ensuring the designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA has received the appropriate training.

- 4.1.4. Ensuring CLA and previously-CLA have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- 4.1.5. Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of CLA in the academy.
- 4.1.6. Ensuring they receive feedback from the Principal/DT regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

#### 4.2. The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- 4.2.1. Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- 4.2.2. Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's CLA, including those placed out-of-authority.
- 4.2.3. Building relationships with health, education, and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to CLA and previously-CLA children.
- 4.2.4. Working with the academy to ensure all CLA in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- 4.2.5. Acting as the educational advocate for CLA.
- 4.2.6. Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-CLA as effectively as possible.
- 4.2.7. Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
  - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the CLA who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance, and progress.
  - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the LA.
  - Ensure social workers, academies, designated teachers, careers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities regarding a child's PEP.
  - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CLA.
  - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
  - Ensure the education achievement of CLA is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
  - Report regularly on the attainment, progress, and school attendance of CLA through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

#### 4.3. The principal is responsible for:

- 4.3.1. Appointing the designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA.
- 4.3.2. Allowing the designated teacher, the time, and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- 4.3.3. Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing body annually on the following:

- The number of CLA and previously-CLA in the academy
- An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other groups
- The attendance of CLA and previously-CLA, compared to other groups
- The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other groups

4.3.4. Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CLA is a key priority.

4.3.5. Promoting actively challenging negative stereotypes of CLA.

#### 4.4. The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for:

4.4.1. Taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.

4.4.2. This includes:

- ensuring that academy staff know who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are,
- understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
- supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

#### 4.5. The designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA is responsible for:

4.5.1. Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to CLA and previously-CLA.

4.5.2. Promoting the educational achievement of CLA and previously-CLA at the academy.

4.5.3. Acting as the main contact for social services and the education department.

4.5.4. Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.

4.5.5. Ensuring CLA are involved in setting their own targets.

4.5.6. Advising staff on teaching strategies for CLA.

4.5.7. Ensuring that CLA are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.

4.5.8. Leading on how the child's personal education plan PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.

4.5.9. Liaising with the SENCO to ensure a child's needs are fully met.

- 4.5.10. Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- 4.5.11. Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all CLA and previously-CLA.

#### 4.6. The SENCO is responsible for:

- 4.6.1. Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CLA and previously-CLA.
- 4.6.2. Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists, and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-CLA.

#### 4.7. Staff are responsible for:

- 4.7.1. Being aware of CLA and previously-CLA in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.
- 4.7.2. Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- 4.7.3. Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards CLA and previously-CLA.
- 4.7.4. Promoting the self-esteem of CLA and previously-CLA.

### 5. Personal education plans (PEPs)

- 5.1. All CLA must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.
- 5.2. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a child to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- 5.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- 5.4. The academy will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- 5.5. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher, and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- 5.6. The PEP will address the child's full range of education and development needs, including:
  - 5.6.1. On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
  - 5.6.2. Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
  - 5.6.3. Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.

- 5.6.4. School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- 5.7. Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
  - 5.7.1. Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
  - 5.7.2. Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training, and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities, and the outcomes they want to achieve.
  - 5.7.3. Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

## 6. Working with agencies and the VSH

- 6.1. The academy will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the CLA social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
  - 6.1.1. The academy will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of CLA with their statutory care review.
  - 6.1.2. The academy will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions, or attendance issues.
  - 6.1.3. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the academy, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
  - 6.1.4. Individual plans will be written to reduce any need for restraint or reasonable force if the child is deemed vulnerable in this way.
  - 6.1.5. The designated teacher for CLA and previously-CLA will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
  - 6.1.6. Through the designated teacher, the academy will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
  - 6.1.7. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how pupil premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
  - 6.1.8. PP+ for previously-CLA will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the academy.
  - 6.1.9. The academy will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of CLA, or previously-CLA, and according to their needs.
  - 6.1.10. If deemed necessary, the academy will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.



- 6.1.11. The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding CLA who are absent without authorisation.
- 6.1.12. The academy will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CLA and previously-CLA.

## 7. Training

- 7.1. The designated teacher and other academy staff involved in the education of CLA and previously-CLA have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:
  - Academy admissions arrangements
  - SEND
  - Attendance
  - Exclusions
  - Homework
  - GCSE options
  - Managing and challenging behaviour
  - Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
  - Supporting children to be aspirational for their future education, training, and employment

## 8. Child mental health

- 8.1. CLA and previously-CLA are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional, and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training, and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- 8.2. The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the academy is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CLA and previously-CLA, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- 8.3. To regularly measure the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by CLA and previously-CLA, a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire will be used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about CLA's emotional wellbeing. Teachers will regularly complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

## 9. Suspension and permanent exclusion

- 9.1. Past experiences of CLA and previously-CLA will be considered when designing and implementing the academy's behaviour policy.
- 9.2. The academy will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' 2023 and, as far as possible, avoid suspending or permanently excluding any CLA.

- 9.3. Where the academy has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- 9.4. Where a looked-after child 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. The VSH, working with the DT and others, should consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion. Where relevant, the school should also engage with a child's social worker, foster carers, or children's home workers. The academy will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid suspension
- 9.5. Academies must consult with the Director of Inclusion when considering permanent exclusion of a child with SEND.

## 10. Children with SEND

- 10.1. Support for CLA with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.
- 10.2. The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- 10.3. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-CLA.

## 11. Information sharing

- 11.1. Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CLA and previously-CLA are understood and met.
- 11.2. The arrangements set out:
  - 11.2.1. Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured.
  - 11.2.2. How children and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
  - 11.2.3. How carers contribute to and receive information.
  - 11.2.4. Mechanisms for sharing information between the academy and relevant LA departments.
  - 11.2.5. How relevant information about individual children is passed between authorities, departments, and the academy when children move.