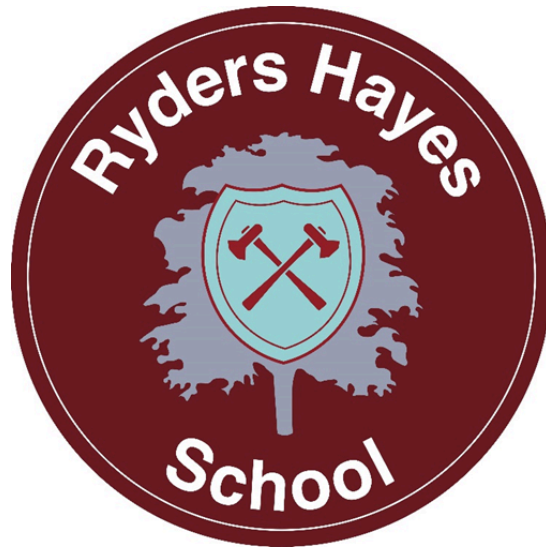


Ryders Hayes School

A Primary Learning Academy



Looked after children (LAC) / Children looked after (CLA) policy

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Head of School
October 2025

Mission: At Ryders Hayes School, children and staff will strive to:

'Do the right thing to be the best you can be'... 

Vision: To nurture and facilitate the growth of our pupils and their learning; equipping them with the skills and attributes to embrace the challenges of a rapidly changing world. To enjoy success for today and be prepared for tomorrow, by instilling the values of:

Character: *qualities of the individual essential for being personally effective in a complex world including: grit, tenacity, perseverance, resilience, independence, reliability and honesty.*

Citizenship: *upholding British Values, thinking like global citizens, considering global issues based on deep understanding of diverse values with genuine interest in engaging with others to solve complex problems that impact human and environmental sustainability*

Collaboration: *the capacity to work interdependently and synergistically in teams with strong interpersonal and team-related skills including effective management of team dynamics, making substantive decisions together, and learning from and contributing to the learning of others.*

Communication: *entailing mastery of three fluencies: digital, writing and speaking tailored for a range of audiences, through early, high-quality back and forth interaction.*

Creativity: having an 'entrepreneurial eye' for economic and social opportunities, asking the right questions to generate novel ideas and explore possibilities, demonstrating leadership to pursue those ideas into practice.

Critical Thinking: *critically evaluating information and arguments, reflecting upon them, seeing patterns and connections, constructing meaningful knowledge and applying it in the real world.*

Ryders Hayes is a Gold Rights Respecting School and as such strongly believes in and promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All our policies exemplify these rights and our practice aims to ensure that the following rights are adhered to.

Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 12: Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 13: Every child must be free to say what they think and seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 14: Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this right.

Article 19: Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 28: Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and their environment.

Article 30: Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 36: Governments must protect children from all other forms of bad treatment.

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1. Aims

Definition

'Looked After Children' (LAC) and 'Children Looked After' (CLA) is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

2. Legislation and statutory responsibilities

This policy includes requirements set out in 'Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004' and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Chair of Governors : Maria Smith

Designated Lead: Mrs Sarah Willis

Headteacher/Head of school : Mrs Louise Deeley

Wellbeing & Safeguarding Lead: Mr Marcos Rylance

Ryders Hayes School's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Children looked after (CLA)/Looked After children (LAC).
- All CLA will have a 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 and the support they require.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting good attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- 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 difficulties and educational disadvantages of CLA.

3.1 Responsibility of the Head Teacher

- Follow the DfE guidance 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' (February 2018)
- Identify a Designated Teacher for CLA, whose role is set out below;
 - It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
 - Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of CLA and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
 - Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of CLA to all parties involved.
 - Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

3.2 Responsibility of the Board of Trustees

Ensure that all Trustees are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CLA:

The Education (Admission of Looked After Children England) Regulations 2006. Relevant DfE guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors) and Promoting the education of lookedafter children and previously lookedafter children Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018);

- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of CLA.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of CLA.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head Teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of CLA are recognised and met.

Receive a termly report setting out:

1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, is compared to other pupils.
3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

3.3 The role of the Designated Teacher

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs are identified and met.
- This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.

- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the CLA in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- Ensure that each CLA has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Coordinate any support for the CLA that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage CLAs may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage CLA to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Trustees, raising their awareness of the needs of CLA.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be proactive in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attending training as required to keep fully informed of the latest developments and policies regarding CLA.

3.4 The responsibility of all staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA, as for all pupils.
- Maintain CLA confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable CLA to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all CLA.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of CLA.

4. Equal opportunities

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, CLA are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, CLA significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances.

Ryders Hayes School recognises that CLA can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting, and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that CLA may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework,

getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. Ryders Hayes recognises that CLA may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. Where appropriate, additional sessions will be provided with the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Leader to support CLA.

Ryders Hayes School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every CLA can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that CLA are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

5. Confidentiality

Information on CLA will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know' basis. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

6. Record keeping and information sharing

- The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Children looked After and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.
- A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the CLA or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the CLA. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly.
- Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.
- It is vital that the CLA or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

7. Suspension and Exclusions

Ryders Hayes School recognises that CLA are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a CLA is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the Looked After Child to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The CLA's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent any suspension/exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy for more information.

8. Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Looked After Children. Other staff will

receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with CLA, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being above Age Related Expectations or Greater Depth or having learning or physical needs. Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision will be informed of those Looked After Children who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

9. Support and resources

The Board of Trustees will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for CLA, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

10. Home-school partnership

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable CLA to achieve their potential. Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working

11. Admission arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements CLA may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognises that Looked After children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Children Looked After in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (2021) Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2022.

12. Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

13. Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is adapted for the performance of all groups and individuals. Ryders Hayes is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

The school will review this policy annually at the Local Governing Board and assess its implementation and effectiveness.