

The Godolphin Junior Academy

Part of The Park Federation Academy Trust

Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

Policy Control & Document History

Policy Control Element	Details
Document Name	Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy
Academy	The Godolphin Junior Academy
Trust Association	The Park Federation Academy Trust
Version	1.0
Implementation Date	September 2026
Review Cycle	Annual (Academic Year 2026-2027)
Approving Body	The Godolphin Junior Academy Council & Local Governing Board

Policy Control Element	Details
Designated Teacher for CLA	Rizwana Hussain
Lead Safeguarding Software	CPOMS

1. Introduction and Core Ethos

At The Godolphin Junior Academy, we are deeply committed to providing a secure, nurturing, and highly ambitious educational environment for all our pupils. We recognize that Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) represent one of the most vulnerable and historically disadvantaged pupil cohorts nationally. These children often face significant barriers to learning, including gaps in their education, trauma, attachment difficulties, and placement instability.

Our core philosophy dictates that a child's care status must never dictate their academic trajectory or personal potential. We are committed to a trauma-informed, whole-school approach that wraps around the child, providing consistency, high-quality teaching, and targeted emotional support. We work in relentless partnership with parents, foster carers, social workers, and Virtual School Heads (VSH) to ensure these pupils not only survive in school but thrive, achieving outcomes that match or exceed their peers.

2. Legislative Framework and Statutory Guidance

This policy is a statutory requirement and is rigorously anchored in UK law and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. The Godolphin Junior Academy fulfills its duties under the following frameworks:

Primary Legislation

- **The Children Act 1989:** (Specifically Sections 20, 22, and 31) Defines the legal status of "looked after" children and mandates local authorities and associated agencies to

safeguard and promote their welfare.

- **The Children and Young Persons Act 2008:** (Section 20) Legally mandates all maintained schools and academies to appoint a designated member of staff (a qualified teacher) to champion the educational achievement of CLA.
- **The Children and Families Act 2014:** Focuses on the rights of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), highly relevant as a significant proportion of CLA pupils have dual-vulnerability.
- **The Children and Social Work Act 2017:** Extended the statutory duties of schools and Virtual Schools to formally include and promote the educational achievement of Previously Looked After Children (PLAC).

Statutory DfE Guidance

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE):** Governs the protection of vulnerable children, highlighting the specific safeguarding risks associated with care-experienced youth, including exploitation and mental health crises.
- **The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE):** Outlines the explicit duties, administrative responsibilities, and strategic role of the Designated Teacher.
- **Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE):** Details how schools must collaborate with the local authority and Virtual School Heads.

3. Definitions of Target Cohorts

To ensure precise targeting of support and funding, the academy adheres to strict legal definitions of care status.

Children Looked After (CLA)

A child is "looked after" by a local authority if they are in their care or are provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours. The academy supports pupils under various statutory orders:

- **Section 20 (Voluntary Accommodation):** The child is accommodated by the local authority with the voluntary agreement of the parents. Parents retain parental responsibility.
- **Section 31 (Care Order) & Section 38 (Interim Care Order):** The child is subject to a court order placing them in the care of the local authority, which shares parental responsibility with the birth parents.
- **Emergency Protection Orders:** Immediate, short-term court orders to remove a child

from immediate danger.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

A child is "previously looked after" if they were looked after by a local authority in England (or state care outside England) and ceased to be so as a result of:

- **An Adoption Order.**
- **A Special Guardianship Order (SGO):** Appointing one or more individuals to be a child's "special guardian."
- **A Child Arrangements Order (CAO):** Settling the living arrangements of the child.

4. Comprehensive Roles and Responsibilities

The successful support of CLA and PLAC requires a multi-layered, highly accountable whole-school approach.

4.1 The Designated Teacher: Rizwana Hussain

The Designated Teacher (DT) is the central operational and strategic lead for CLA and PLAC within the academy. Rizwana Hussain is responsible for ensuring that the academy's policies are translated into daily, impactful practice.

Strategic Duties:

- **Advocacy:** Cultivating a culture of high expectations and trauma-informed understanding among all staff.
- **Register & Tracking:** Maintaining an accurate, highly secure, and up-to-date register of all CLA and PLAC pupils.
- **Funding Management:** Applying for, managing, and tracking the impact of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding in collaboration with the Virtual School.
- **Reporting:** Presenting an annual, anonymized report to the Academy Council regarding the academic progress, attendance, and well-being of the cohort.

Operational Duties:

- **Personal Education Plans (PEPs):** Leading the PEP process, ensuring high-quality, SMART targets are set and reviewed termly.
- **Multi-Agency Liaison:** Serving as the primary contact for Social Workers, Foster Carers, and the Virtual School Head.
- **Transition Management:** Overseeing robust transition plans when a CLA pupil joins the school, moves year groups, or transfers to secondary education.
- **Staff Training:** Ensuring that all teachers and support staff are trained in attachment theory, developmental trauma, and effective classroom interventions.

4.2 The Academy Council & Local Governing Board

The Governing Body holds ultimate statutory responsibility for the welfare of CLA pupils at the academy.

- **Governor Appointment:** Appointing a named Governor specifically responsible for CLA/PLAC oversight.
- **Accountability:** Regularly challenging school leadership on the outcomes, attendance, and exclusion rates of CLA pupils compared to their peers.
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring Rizwana Hussain has the necessary protected time, administrative support, and professional development to execute the DT role effectively.

4.3 The Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- **Culture:** Embedding a culture where the needs of vulnerable children are prioritized in every decision, from curriculum design to behavior management.
- **Oversight:** Working closely with the DT to monitor the impact of interventions and ensuring safeguarding protocols are flawlessly executed.

4.4 All Teaching and Support Staff

Safeguarding and educating CLA is everyone's responsibility.

- **Quality-First Teaching:** Delivering differentiated, highly engaging lessons that accommodate cognitive gaps or specific learning needs.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice:** Recognizing that poor behavior is often communication of distress. Staff must employ de-escalation techniques and avoid confrontational, punitive responses.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintaining strict confidentiality regarding a child's care status, sharing information strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- **Vigilance:** Utilizing the school's CPOMS system to immediately log any safeguarding concerns, behavioral changes, or emotional distress.

5. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) Process

The PEP is the statutory tool used to ensure that everyone actively involved in the child's care is working together to support their educational progress. At The Godolphin Junior Academy, the PEP process is rigorous and highly structured.

PEP Stage	Description and Timeframes
1. Initiation	A new PEP must be drafted within 20 school days of a CLA pupil joining the academy, or within 20 days of an existing pupil entering the care system.
2. Collaboration	Coordinated by Rizwana Hussain, the PEP meeting must include the child's Social Worker, Carer, and relevant teaching staff.
3. Pupil Voice	The child is explicitly consulted prior to the meeting. Their views on their learning, friendships, and future aspirations form the core of the document.
4. Target Setting	PEP targets must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound). They must focus on academic progression and emotional development, strictly tied to PP+ funding.
5. Termly Review	PEPs are living documents. They are formally reviewed and updated three times a year (once per term) alongside the Virtual School to assess progress and adjust interventions.

6. Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Funding

Children Looked After and Previously Looked After attract additional central government funding designed to close the attainment gap.

- **CLA Funding:** PP+ for CLA is held and managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH). The Designated Teacher (Rizwana Hussain) must apply for this funding through the PEP process, demonstrating exactly how it will be spent to achieve specific targets.

- **PLAC Funding:** PP+ for PLAC is allocated directly to the school budget based on the January census.
- **Evidence-Based Spending:** The academy commits to spending PP+ on interventions proven to have high impact. This includes:
 - One-to-one or small group academic tutoring.
 - Trauma-informed emotional support (e.g., ELSA, play therapy, counseling).
 - Providing essential enrichment opportunities (music lessons, residential trips, sports clubs) to ensure parity of experience with their peers.
 - Specialist educational equipment or digital devices.
- **Prohibited Spending:** PP+ will *not* be used to fund standard school services, general staffing costs, or interventions that do not directly benefit the targeted child.

7. Safeguarding, Behaviour, and Emotional Wellbeing

Care-experienced children are statistically more vulnerable to safeguarding risks, including exploitation, mental health crises, and peer-on-peer abuse.

Safeguarding Protocols

- All staff operate under the mandates of KCSIE 2026.
- Any disclosure, unexplainable absence, or sign of physical/emotional distress is logged immediately on CPOMS.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the DT (Rizwana Hussain) work seamlessly to ensure social workers are notified of any emerging concerns without delay.

Behaviour and Exclusions

The Godolphin Junior Academy utilizes a restorative, trauma-informed approach to behavior management. We understand that traditional, punitive sanctions can re-traumatize children with attachment disorders.

- **De-escalation:** Staff use calm scripts, sensory breaks, and relationship-building to manage dysregulation.
- **Alternatives to Exclusion:** Statistically, CLA pupils are disproportionately excluded nationally. The academy views suspension or permanent exclusion as an absolute last resort.
- **Multi-Agency Intervention:** If a CLA pupil is at risk of exclusion, the DT will convene an emergency meeting with the Social Worker and the Virtual School to implement a proactive Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) or seek alternative provision.

8. Admissions, Attendance, and Transitions

Admissions

In strict compliance with the national School Admissions Code, CLA and PLAC are given the absolute highest priority in the academy's oversubscription criteria. The school will never refuse a CLA pupil on the grounds of behavioral history or missing educational records.

Attendance

High attendance is critical to closing the attainment gap.

- Attendance of CLA pupils is monitored daily by the attendance team and the DT.
- First-day calling protocols are strictly enforced. If a CLA pupil is absent without explanation, the foster carer and social worker are contacted immediately.

Transitions

Moving between year groups or transitioning to secondary school can trigger severe anxiety for care-experienced children.

- **Internal Transitions:** Enhanced handover meetings occur between current and future teachers, ensuring all trauma triggers and academic targets are understood.
- **Primary to Secondary:** Rizwana Hussain coordinates heavily with the receiving secondary school's DT during Year 6. Additional accompanied visits are arranged, and all secure CPOMS and SEND files are transferred within 5 working days of placement confirmation.

9. Information Sharing and GDPR

The academy respects the extreme sensitivity of a child's care status.

- **Need to Know:** Information regarding a child's legal status, trauma history, or family circumstances is shared with staff strictly on a "need-to-know" basis to facilitate effective teaching and safeguarding.
- **Data Security:** All files, PEPs, and safeguarding logs are kept in secure, encrypted digital formats (CPOMS) accessible only by authorized personnel.
- **Stigma Reduction:** Staff are trained to never discuss a child's care status openly, in front of other pupils, or in public areas of the school, protecting the child from stigma or unwanted questioning.

10. Connected Academy Policies

To ensure a cohesive and legally robust framework, this CLA/PLAC policy operates in direct conjunction with the following Park Federation and Godolphin Junior Academy policies:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Positive Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy