

# LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY – May 2019

## Who are Looked After Children?

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who has been taken into Care by the local authority, or has been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes but a small number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their natural parent(s).

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and

A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

## Rationale

In our school aims we state that we will value and respect ourselves and others. Therefore we believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, spiritual, physical and moral development of the individual child. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 places a duty to safeguard "Looked After Children", to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to 'achieve to and reach their full potential' making the most of their God-given talents.

## Aims and Objectives

1. To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence in order that they are able to approach adults when they are in need of support believing they will be listened to.
  - All LAC children will be made known to the Designated Teacher, Safeguarding team, teachers, and strategies will be implemented to raise their confidence and self-esteem.
2. To raise the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children and in particular of their responsibilities in identifying possible cases of abuse or exclusion from our community.
  - All members of staff are provided with regular opportunities to update their Safeguarding Training, as well as completing their statutory safeguarding training every 3 years, and to develop their understanding of the issues with which LAC children are often faced, such as exclusion, low-self-esteem and abuse.
  - Procedures for safeguarding Looked After Children are included in the Staff Handbook and are updated annually
  - The school will designate a senior member of staff to be the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will oversee this role. These Officers will undergo relevant and up-to-date training every two years.
  - All job descriptions include the responsibility to report signs of abuse or exclusion to the safeguarding team at St Vincent's Primary Catholic School.
3. To provide a systematic means of monitoring LAC children, continuing to have high expectations and offering early intervention to aid their academic progress
  - To maintain good levels of communication between all members of staff around LAC.
  - To ensure the progress and achievement of LAC is tracked and monitored after each assessment window.
  - To ensure that procedures within school are followed consistently and swiftly, and that appropriate action is taken by all members of staff in cases of abuse, exclusion from the community and underachievement.

- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will plan and prepare a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each LAC, in conjunction with parents / carers. All PEPs will be reviewed every term.
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to support the academic progress of LAC in a timely and efficient manner

4. To develop effective working relationships with parents, carers, parishes and other agencies to maintain a sense of continuity and stability for each LAC.

- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to safeguarding, academic monitoring and pastoral & spiritual welfare. (For example, in the School Prospectus, Subject Evenings, Information Evenings.)
- The Designated Teacher for LAC, Safeguarding team will meet regularly with outside agencies to discuss the academic progress of LAC pupils and any circumstances which might impact on their progress.
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and LAC Reviews will be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Local Authorities' Virtual School.

<u>EQUALITY MONITORING</u>	Date: .....
<p><b>1. Does this policy have any implications for people of relevant protected characteristics (RPC)*?</b>          Yes, because regardless of the relevant protected characteristics, Looked After Children will be treated in the same way.</p> <p><b>2. If 'yes', will it advantage or disadvantage any particular group?</b>          It should not disadvantage or advantage any group.</p> <p><b>3. How will this policy, if relevant, promote good race relations?</b>          Looked After Children of all ethnic groups will be encouraged to develop high self-esteem and achieve their full potential.</p> <p>Monitored by .....</p> <p><i>*Age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.</i></p>	

<b>Success Criteria</b>	Date: .....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAC make the expected levels of progress from EYFS to KS2</li> <li>• LAC are not "over-represented" in the             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ bullying incident</li> <li>▪ racial incidents</li> <li>▪ exclusion data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## **Procedures to be carried out in connection with the Looked After Children Policy**

The Children and Young Persons Act, 2008 demands that a designated teacher is appointed to support LAC and to plan with social workers and parents/carers to provide an individual Personal Education Plan.

The designated teacher for LAC at St Vincent's Catholic Primary is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All members of the safeguarding team staff have completed enhanced safeguarding training at level 3 which is updated every 2 years.

**The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities - February 2018 states that:**

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Governing Body**

Section 20 of the 2008 Act places the following duties on governing bodies:

- to designate a member of staff (the designated teacher) as having the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered pupils at the school;
- to ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training
- the governing body and the designated teacher must have regard to this guidance and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The governing body, head teacher and school leadership team will want to consider the following in supporting the designated teacher role:

- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and act as a champion for them?
- Does the designated teacher have training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including a good knowledge of SEN?
- How does the designated teacher role contribute to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve?
- What resource implications might there be in supporting the designated teacher to carry out their role?
- What expertise can designated teachers call on within and outside the school such as SENCOs, health and mental health support?
- What monitoring arrangements might be appropriate to ensure that the role of the designated teacher is providing appropriate support for looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school roll?

The needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children may have implications for almost every school policy and consideration may want to be given to ensure that policies are effective in reflecting their needs. How schools monitor this is up to them, but some of the issues that may be considered are:

- that there are no unintended barriers to the admission of looked-after and previously looked-after children either at normal transition or any other point of the school year;
- whether there are any issues arising as a result of the number of looked-after and previously looked-after children on roll at the school and the number of local authorities which are involved;

- whether looked-after and previously looked-after children have made the expected or better levels of progress over the past twelve months in line with their peers (i.e. educational, social and emotional progress);
- whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked-after and previously looked-after children is different to that of other children at the school;
- for looked-after children, whether the school's policies are sensitive to their needs, e.g. in accessing out of school hours learning, respecting the children's wishes and feelings about their care status or generally meeting their needs as identified in their personal education plans (PEPs);
- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met;
- whether any looked-after or previously looked-after children face additional safeguarding challenges of which the school's designated safeguarding lead should be aware;
- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level;
- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children have mental health needs and whether those needs are being identified and met;
- whether the school's behaviour management policy is sufficiently flexible to respond to looked-after and previously looked-after children's challenging behaviour in the most effective way for those children;
- how the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are reflected in school policies, in particular in relation to interventions and resources;
- what the impact is of any of the school's policies, e.g. on charging for educational visits and extended school activities, on looked-after children
- what impact Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) has in supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Governing bodies should, through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the PP+ is used) and their level of progress. In some schools, designated teachers do this by providing the governing body with a regular report.

### **The role of the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children**

The designated teacher should be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

The most effective designated teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This involves, working with VSHs to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:

- have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;

- understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and
- for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

Designated teachers are also likely to have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by:

- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that:
  - o they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
  - o there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
  - o there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
  - o particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
  - o transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
  - o thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about, where appropriate, further and higher education, training and employment;
  - o when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and
  - o there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings).
- Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children;
  - o are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
  - o are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
  - o are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
  - o believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
  - o can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
- Being a source of advice for teachers about:
  - o differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and

o the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.

- Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:
  - o promote good home-school links;
  - o support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
  - o ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
  - o ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and
  - o encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
- having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary; and
- working closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.

When supporting previously looked-after children, designated teachers should be aware of the following: the VSH must provide information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of these children - this may be general information, including training opportunities, or information and advice on individual children at the request of their parents or designated teacher. The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, including any requests to the VSH for advice on meeting their individual needs.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Staff**

- As with all pupils, have high expectations and celebrate the educational, spiritual and personal achievement of LAC.
- To ensure entry to examinations for LAC.
- To liaise with the designated teacher where a LAC is experiencing difficulty.
- To encourage the inclusion of LAC and be sensitive to their needs.
- To be familiar with the Guidance on LAC and to respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed for review meetings.
- To encourage LAC to develop their God-given talents to their fullest potential and to encourage involvement in extra-curricular activities.