

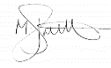
# St Marie's Catholic Primary School

*"Learning through faith, love and respect"*



## Education of Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Date Reviewed	Updated January 2022 Review by Governors 10/2/22
Person Responsible:	SENDCO Headteacher

**Signed:**  Mrs Melanie Smith (Headteacher) **Date:** 19.1.2022

**Signed:** *Miss Denise Price* (SENDCO) **Date:** 19.1.2022

**Signed:** *Mrs Frances Cheetham* (Chair/Governor) **Date:** 19.1.2022

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## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

St Marie's Catholic Primary School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for CLA realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

### **1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

From 1 September 2009 all Governing Bodies were required under the Childrens and Young Persons Act of 2008, to appoint a Pupil Premium (PP) Joint Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children.

The Families Act of 2014 also required all Local Authorities to appoint a Pupil Premium (PP) Joint Virtual School Head teacher to ensure that the educational achievement of Looked After Children was seen as a priority and to ensure arrangements were in place to improve their educational outcomes.

Previous legislation and guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for Pupil Premium (PP) supporting and promoting the education of Looked After Children.

#### **Schools are required to:**

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education for all Children Looked After
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of Children Looked After

- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions for all Children Looked After ;
- Ensure there is a (qualified) Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of all Children Looked After who are on the school roll;
- Develop effective systems of communications and protocols;
- Promote the attendance of Children Looked After.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2021) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

### **WHO ARE OUR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA)?**

Most Children Looked After will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is in the Care of the Local Authority if he or she is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Authority. This includes the following:

- Children who are accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- Children who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order;
- Children who are the subject of Emergency Orders for the protection of the child.

### **WHO ARE PREVIOUSLY-CLA (PLAC)?**

**Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)** are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- 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).

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.**

### **THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

The Governors will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance. The governing board of St Marie's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises the need to champion performance, for CLA and PLAC, and is committed to improving outcomes for them.

The Designated Governor in school is **Mrs Michelle McGlown**

The governing body is committed to ensuring that CLA and PLAC are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in PLACe, and are working effectively:

- A Designated Governor for CLA and PLAC
- A Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- The Designated Teacher, as a minimum, will have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of CLA and PLAC.

- All staff in school will have a clear understanding of the issues that affect CLA and PLAC; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality.

The Governing board will hold the school to account on how it supports its CLA and PLAC, including:

- How the Pupil Premium PLUS (PP+) is used
- The level of pupil progress

## **THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

The Designated Teacher will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance.

The Designated Teacher is the central point of initial contact within St Marie's Catholic Primary School. They ensure 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 Designated Teacher is Mrs Melanie Smith (Head Teacher).

The Designated Teacher will take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. Our school will make sure that all staff:

- Have high expectations of 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 and trauma informed practice).
- Understand how important it is to see children as individuals.
- Appreciate the central importance of the CLA's PEP.
- For PLAC, 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.

The Designated Teacher will have a direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of CLA and PLAC. They will:

- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures.
- Ensure the pupil premium plus is used effectively within school to have the greatest positive impact on children's learning. This includes: ensuring parents and guardians of PLAC are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PUPIL PREMIUM (PP).
- Ensure CLA and PLAC are prioritised for support; listened to; encouraged to participate; and believe they can achieve through an ethos of aspiration.
- The Designated Teacher will co-chair Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and make a record of discussions and decisions, so that each child has access to the support they need to achieve. These meetings will take place a minimum of three times per academic year to review support and deploy effective resources.
- The Designated Teacher will closely monitor school attendance and suspensions.

### **THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER AND LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Provide an annual report on the provision for, and progress of, CLA and PLAC, to the Governing body.
- Ensure staff are aware that the provision to support CLA and PLAC is a key school priority.
- Give the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC, the time and facilities to carry out his / her job description and to support them at all times in their work.
- Ensure the voice of CLA and PLAC is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs.
- Ensure Pupil Premium Plus is allocated and used for the benefit of CLA and PLAC to support progress, attainment, engagement and well-being.
- Provide continuing professional development for staff on issues pertaining to CLA and PLAC, such as Attachment and Trauma.
- Work in partnership with the Virtual School, Children's Social Care and other relevant services to share information and promote progress and achievement.

## **ALL SCHOOL STAFF WILL**

- Have high expectations of and aspirations for CLA and PLAC's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- Be 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 CLA and PLAC 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 legal status.
- Appreciate the central importance of the 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, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;
- For PLAC, 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.

## **4. PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN (PEP)**

All CLA must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

The school with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- Access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.



- On-going catch-up support which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
  - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
  - 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.
  - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a CLA or PLAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PUPIL PREMIUM (PP) funding to improve their attainment.

Any interventions supported by PUPIL PREMIUM (PP) will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

#### **AT ST MARIE'S WE WILL:**

- Hold a PEP meeting in time for every Statutory Care Review that involves the Social Worker, Foster Carers, child and parent (if appropriate).
- Additional attendees may include eg. Virtual School, Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare Officer etc We will seek the views of the child as to appropriate attendees in line with the statutory guidance;
- Have a high quality PEP for each child which includes appropriate targets and has been quality assured by the Virtual School;
- Contribute to the process whereby all Children Looked After have a high quality PEP in place within 20 days of starting at the school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and

any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (IEP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need);

- Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in the PEP will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Children Looked After have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set;
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is carefully targeted to improve the educational outcomes of the Child in Care and used as identified in the Personal Education Plan

## **5. WORKING WITH AGENCIES AND THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH)**

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the CLA social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.

The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of CLA with their statutory care review.

The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard CLA and PLAC.

Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

The designated teacher for CLA and PLAC will communicate with the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.

Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (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. The designated teacher will communicate with the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) and agree on how PUPIL PREMIUM (PP) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.

PUPIL PREMIUM (PP) for PLAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. The school will work with the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) to manage allocation of PUPIL PREMIUM (PP) for the benefit of our cohort of CLA, or PLAC,

and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) regarding CLA who are absent without authorisation.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CLA and PLAC.

## **6. TRAINING**

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of CLA and PLAC will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- Exam Access
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

All training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep CLA and PLAC safe.

## **7. SAFEGUARDING**

The school recognises that many CLA and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst CLA and PLAC as soon as possible.

Where a CLA or PLAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of CLA and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over CLA or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a CLA or PLAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

## **8. PUPIL MENTAL HEALTH**

CLA and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The designated teacher will work with the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CLA and PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

At St Marie's, we understand that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst CLA and PLAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with CLA or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils. CLA and PLAC pupil's will receive Nurture support time weekly.

A strengths and difficulties questionnaire or Boxall questionnaire will be used on a termly basis to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about CLA and previously-CLA's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

The school's Nurture lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of CLA and previously-CLA, and will always either be a member of, or be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO, or DSL.

The school's SEMH Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that CLA or PLAC may face.

## **9. EXCLUSIONS**

Past experiences of CLA and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any CLA.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a CLA to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.

The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH) on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

When a child is at risk of either a fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher - working with the VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD (VSH), social care and the child's carers - will be asked to consider what additional assessment and support is needed to address the cause of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for suspension.

## **10. PUPILS WITH SEND**

The role of all those involved in supporting Children Looked After with Special Educational Needs is to:

- Quickly identify any Special Educational Needs and ensure appropriate provision will be made;
- Have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Children Looked After are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this;
- Ensure that if the child has a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly Care Planning Reviews; dates can be obtained from the Social Worker.

## **11. INFORMATION SHARING**

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CLA and PLAC are understood and met. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on CLA and PLAC and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

## **12. RELATED DOCUMENTATION**

*DfE - Governance Handbook*

*Promoting the Education of Looked After Children July 2014 ( Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities)*

*DCSF: Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in Primary Schools - Guidance for Schools (2009)*

*DCSF: Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in Secondary Schools - Guidance for Schools (2009)*

*DCSF: The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies (2009)*

*DCSF, Care Matters: Ministerial Stocktake Report (2009)*

*The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2011-12 → DfES: Care Matters - Time For Change(2007)*

*DCSF: The Children's Plan - Building Brighter Futures (2007)*

*DfES: SuPupil Premium (PP)orting Looked After Learners - A Practical Guide for School Governors (2006)*

*Children Act 1989*

*Children Act 2004;*

*Every Child Matters: Change for Children(2004)*

*Social Exclusion Report: A Better Education for Looked After Children (2003)*  
*The Headteacher and/or Designated Teacher will be responsible for briefing all staff on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.*

**TO BE REVIEWED: September 2022**