



# *Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School*

## **Looked After Children Policy**



### **Our Mission Statement**

***'Love One Another As I Have Loved You' (John 13:33-34)***

Agreed by Governors on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Signed  Chair of Governors

To be reviewed: April 2019

### ***Safeguarding Statement:***

***Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all children and expects all staff, parents and volunteers to share this commitment.***

### **Our School Vision**

**As a Catholic school that puts Christ at the centre, we are committed to developing independent, successful and confident children who have high aspirations, who gain a sense of achievement and leave our school with a wealth of happy memories.**

### **Values and Ethos**

**We believe that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God and we value the equality of all, reject discrimination of any kind, and welcome the diversity of different cultures.**

### **Definition of Looked After Children**

**A child is 'looked after' if they are in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours.**

**They might be living:**

- with foster parents
- at home with their parents under the supervision of social services
- in residential children's homes
- other residential settings like schools or secure units.

**They might have been placed in care voluntarily by parents struggling to cope. Or, children's services may have intervened because a child was at significant risk of harm**

“An educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. Effective schools are educationally inclusive schools. This shows, not only in their performance, but also in their ethos and their willingness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. This does not mean treating all pupils in the same way. Rather it involves taking account of pupils’ varied life experiences and needs.”

The above quote is taken from ‘Evaluating Educational Inclusion – Guidance for Inspectors and Schools’ (DfES 2000) and forms the rationale for this policy.

We are also aware that Looked After Children constitute a group in the sense that they may share common experiences as a result of having been taken into Public Care, but that they are also individuals and members of other groups. We will take this into account when planning to meet their needs and avoid any action that may lead to stigmatization.

## **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children, to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their potential, both academically and personally.

## **Objectives**

- Children will receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support by school staff.
- Children will have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities both inside and outside of school.

## **Teachers and other staff in this school will**

- receive an appropriate level of training on the issues affecting the educational achievement and psychological well-being of Looked After Children and use this to guide their interactions with them
- plan for and meet the individual needs of Looked After Children

Throughout this policy we will refer to the Looked After Co-ordinators who are Lorraine Stanton Deputy Head and Geraldine Lucas Pastoral Manager at Our Lady of the Assumption School.

## **The Looked After Co-ordinators and Senior Management will**

- identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to ensure the objectives will take place
- ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
- ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies.

## **1. Induction**

To ensure a supportive and sympathetic induction for Looked After Children admitted to our school, the following arrangements are in place:

The Looked After Co-ordinators will arrange a transition meeting with any previous setting to ensure that all relevant information is gained prior to the admission date. If this is not possible or if there has not been any previous setting then she will meet with all relevant parties, this will include the Foster Carer, Social Worker and parents if appropriate.

Careful consideration will then be made into the most appropriate start date and class teacher, on some occasions it may be necessary to have a reduced timetable at first, this is only required in rare situations.

The child will be met on their first day by the one of the Looked After Co-ordinators.

The Looked After Co-ordinators will then meet them during the first couple of weeks and will also check that the teacher has no concerns.

## **2. Pastoral Support**

To ensure Looked After Children continue to receive an appropriate level of support the following arrangements are in place.

- Geraldine Lucas is available to meet with children either on their request, the class teachers, or the carers. She is available to work on friendships, emotional support or self-esteem.
- The class teacher will be made aware of the needs of the child and will be asked to monitor them in terms of academic progress, emotional wellbeing and general presentation.
- The class teacher will provide information for the PEP and LAC reviews, which will be put on to the ePEP system.
- Should any concerns arise these will be discussed with the carers if appropriate and the allocated Social Worker.

## **3. Information**

- The Looked After Co-ordinators will seek and receive information about the academic attainment and other educational issues affecting the learning of newly admitted Looked After Children at an early stage and pass this on to relevant staff to avoid unnecessary breaks in learning. This will include the Personal Education Plan which should be available to access on ePEP. If there is no current ePEP, the Looked After Co-ordinators will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure this is part of the initial meeting in school.
- Information about the circumstances of Looked After Children will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Where no particular arrangements are in place, only teaching staff who are in direct contact with a Looked After Child will be informed of these. If there are learning or behaviour issues for a Looked After Child, all staff will be informed by the Looked After Co-ordinators of strategies in place or if the young person is experiencing particular difficulties. Supply teachers and non-teaching staff will be given an appropriate amount of information, to be determined by Headteacher.
- The ePEP will also include information on who should receive information, sign for trips etc and will record achievements either in or out of school.

Information about the academic attainment of all Looked After Children in school will be collected as follows:

- Academic achievements of the child will be monitored in line with current school procedures. Data is collected half termly and put on to Otrack (a computer based programme) discussed during Pupil Progress Meetings, which take place during the last week of each half term. All this information is used to inform meetings with parents, carers, Social care etc.
- Parental consultations take place twice a year and both parents and carers are invited to these, if this is appropriate. Mid –term and end of year reports will be forwarded to parents again if appropriate and to the allocated social worker.
- The assessment information will be analysed by the Looked After Co-ordinators and class teacher to measure the attainment of Looked After Children against the school population as a whole. Information about the attendance and behaviour of Looked After Children will be reported on during LAC reviews and PEP meetings. If this was a cause for concern further meetings and external agencies may be required to support and to consider whether early interventions may be needed to address this. Careful monitoring around fixed term exclusions would be required.

Information about the attendance and behaviour of Looked After Children will be reported on during LAC reviews and PEP meetings. If this was a cause for concern further meetings and external agencies may be required to support and to consider whether early interventions may be needed to address this. Careful monitoring around fixed term exclusions would be required.

## **4. Strategies**

### **4.1 Curriculum**

If a Looked After Child appears to be having difficulties with the curriculum or to be failing to engage with it, this will be addressed as follows:

- The class teacher will look at all possible contributory factors and gather a wide range of evidence in conjunction with other relevant staff
- Look for factors which may be masking underlying learning difficulties
- Talk to the child.

If concerns persist over time then issues around Learning Difficulties may need to be considered, see the School Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy for further information.

We recognise that there are factors, which may prevent Looked After Children from achieving as highly as they could, even if there are no apparent learning difficulties. To ensure that underachievement does not go unrecognised, the attainment of each Looked After Child will be tracked and compared to previous results. If progress is not as could be expected, the school will consider the use of incentive schemes, mentoring and use of interventions.

We are aware that certain aspects of the curriculum, for example activities to mark Mother's Day or to investigate family history may cause difficulties for Looked After Children and we will ensure this is handled sensitively by planning alternative but relevant activities.

#### **4.2 Attendance**

If a Looked After Child is identified as having poor attendance or punctuality

- The Social Worker and carers will be contacted by the Looked After Co-ordinators to gain their support and collect any relevant information
- We will continue to work with Children and Families First who will be involved fully in planning and delivering strategies to improve attendance, refer to the School Attendance policy for further information

#### **4.3 Behaviour**

We recognise that psychological trauma and lack of continuity in the lives of Looked After Children may lead to challenging behaviour in school and that it is especially important to employ positive behaviour strategies in these circumstances. The following arrangements are in place to address behaviour problems at an early stage:

- The Looked After Co-ordinators will contact the Social Worker, Carer and if appropriate the parents as soon as behaviour problems are identified or if there are significant changes to the behaviour of a Looked After Child. Refer to the school Behaviour policy for further information.
- If the problem continues, the Social Worker, carers and staff from support services such as the Educational Psychology Service, LABSS and LACES will be invited to a meeting with appropriate school staff to determine supportive strategies to reduce the problem behaviour. The responsibility for organising such a meeting lies with the Looked After Co-ordinators.
- We recognise that Looked After Children as a group are far more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole, and that exclusion can place additional pressure on foster placements. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring the school will arrange a meeting as soon as possible with all relevant parties and a member of the Local Authority to consider if all measures have been taken.

#### **4.4 Homework**

Whilst we recognise that Looked After Children may not always find it easy to complete homework, we believe they should be given support and encouragement to do so. There are times set aside for children to complete homework at break times/clubs etc.

## **4.5 Extra-Curricular Activities**

We recognise that Looked After Children are often prevented from joining in with after school activities because of transport arrangements and that they may resist taking part in any school based activities because of poor relationships with their peers, for example. As we believe it is essential that Looked After Children are able to play a full part in school life, the following strategies are in place to help them to do this:

- The Looked After Co-ordinators will monitor the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities during PEP and LAC reviews and will discuss any additional clubs and activities that they may be interested in. Barriers to them attending these clubs will be considered and addressed as much as possible during the above meetings.
- The Looked After Co-ordinators will liaise with the young person, carers and Social Workers to try to promote involvement in extra-curricular activities during PEP meetings.
- The Looked After Co-ordinators will liaise with LA support services such as LACES to develop strategies for increasing the involvement of Looked After Children in extra-curricular activities if their uptake is shown to be low. The success of all school strategies and use of funded initiatives will be monitored and evaluated by the Looked After Co-ordinators,
- Collection and analysis of information
- Discussion with school staff, carers, Social Workers and staff from LA Support Services, both informally and during meetings e.g. those set up to write Personal Education Plans Discussions with Looked After Children
- Responsibility for monitoring and evaluating school strategies lies with the Looked After Co-ordinators
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## **5. Liaison with Outside Agencies**

To ensure that all those involved in the education and care of Looked After Children work together in their best interests, the Looked After Co-ordinators will devise and implement effective strategies and procedures for

- Accessing additional support, funding or use of funded initiatives
- Liaising with Social Workers to ensure all Looked After Children have a good quality ePEP.
- Participation in and co-ordination of review and planning meetings for Looked After Children. Statutory school procedures such as Annual Reviews for children with Statements of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) will be timed to coincide with these wherever possible and appropriate.

In addition, school management will do everything possible to enable class teachers or other appropriate staff to attend meetings where this would be in the interests of the young person.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **6.1 The Looked After Co-ordinator's are Mrs Stanton and Mrs Lucas.**

The role of the Looked After Co-ordinator's is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. For this reason the person appointed will be given the time required to carry out these duties. The majority of the roles and responsibilities of the Looked After Co-ordinator's are implicit in the above sections of this policy. In addition, the Looked After Co-ordinator's will

- Attend training sessions organised by the LA
- Cascade this training to school staff
- Arrange and/or deliver training to all staff, including those newly appointed, on issues affecting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and the ways in which educational disadvantage can be overcome
- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register
- Work closely with Social Workers to enable the writing of effective Personal Education Plans which will inform Care Plans
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend or contribute in other ways to SSD care planning meetings
- Work with young people at an appropriate level to enable them to contribute to educational aspects of their care plans

## **6.2 The Head Teacher and Senior Management**

The responsibility for the educational and personal well-being of Looked After Children rests with the Headteacher, although some of the day-to-day tasks may be delegated to other staff. Working with the Senior Management Team, the Headteacher will ensure that inclusive strategies are in place for Looked After Children and that staff, particularly the Looked After Co-ordinators, are enabled to carry them out.

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis

- The number of Looked After pupils in the school
- A comparison of test scores for Looked After Children as a group, compared to those of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Pupil destinations The named governors must be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked After Children have equal access to
- The National Curriculum
- Statutory assessments
- Additional educational support
- Appropriate pastoral support
- Extra-curricular activities

## **6.3 The named Governors with special responsibility for Looked After Children are Patricia Harper and Tony Kiely.**