

# St. Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy

## SCHOOL POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

**St Alban's School will educate our young children within a happy caring environment and Christian atmosphere, thus their whole lives may be inspired by the Spirit of Christ they experience.**

This policy was reviewed in January 2019 by the Governors Pupils and Personnel Committee.  
it is based on a model policy provided by the Local Authority.  
This policy will be reviewed in **January 2022** by the FGB.

**St Alban's Catholic Primary School** aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

**The Designated Teacher for LAC: Mr Andrew Monaghan**  
**Governor with responsibility for LAC: Mrs. Clare Cuomo**

*This policy has been developed in consultation with Derby City Looked After Children and Care Leavers.*

### **Statement of intent**

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for LAC and previously-LAC are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation.

St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy 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 LAC 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.

### **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to 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 (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

## SECTION 1 THE AIMS OF THE SCHOOL ARE TO:

- ensure that **school policies** and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all **school** activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

## SECTION 2 WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN?

### Definitions:

- 2.1. "Looked after children (LAC)" are defined as:
- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
  - Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
  - Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
  - Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.
- 2.2. "Previously-LAC" 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).

## SECTION 3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1. The governing board is responsible for:
- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.
  - Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
  - Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC has received the appropriate training.
  - Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:

- Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.
- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and previously-LAC safe.
- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

### 3.2. The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-LAC as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
  - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
  - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
  - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
  - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
  - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
  - Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
  - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

### 3.3. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:

- The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the school
  - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
  - The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
  - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
  - Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.
- 3.4. The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC is responsible for:
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
  - Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and previously-LAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
  - Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
  - Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
  - Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
  - Advising staff on teaching strategies for LAC.
  - Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
  - Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
  - Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
  - Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
  - Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.
- 3.5. The DSL is responsible for:
- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
  - Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.
- 3.6. The SENCO is responsible for:
- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and previously-LAC.
  - Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-LAC.
- 3.7. Staff are responsible for:
- Being aware of LAC and previously-LAC and providing them with support and encouragement.
  - Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
  - Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and previously-LAC.
  - Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously-LAC.

## **SECTION 4 PEP**

- 4.1 All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan. The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of joining our school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- 4.6. 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.
    - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

*See Appendix 3 - Derby City's guidance on PEP forms*

## **SECTION 5 WORKING WITH AGENCIES AND THE VSH**

- 5.1 The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- 5.2. The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review.
- 5.3. 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 LAC and previously-LAC.
- 5.4. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- 5.5. The designated teacher for LAC and previously-LAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- 5.6. Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the 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.

- 5.7. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how pupil premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- 5.8. PP+ for previously-LAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school.
- 5.9. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or previously-LAC, and according to their needs.
- 5.10. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.
- 5.11. The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.
- 5.12. The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and previously-LAC.

## SECTION 6 TRAINING

- 6.1. The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and previously-LAC have received the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:
  - School admissions arrangements
  - SEND
  - Attendance
  - Exclusions
  - Homework
  - GCSE options
  - Managing and challenging behaviour
  - Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
  - Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
  - Safeguarding

## SECTION 7 PUPIL MENTAL HEALTH

- 7.1 LAC and previously-LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.
- 7.2. The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously-LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- 7.3. A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used on a **regular basis** to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC and previously-LAC's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

## **SECTION 8 EXCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 Past experiences of LAC and previously-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behavioural Policy.
- 8.2. 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 LAC.
- 8.3. Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.4. Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and 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.
- 8.5. The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

## **SECTION 9 PUPILS WITH SEND**

- 9.1 Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.
- 9.2. The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- 9.3. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-LAC.

## **SECTION 10 INFORMATION SHARING**

- 10.1 Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met.
- 10.2. The arrangements set out include:
  - Who has access to information on LAC and previously LAC 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.

## **SECTION 11 LAC POLICY REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

- 11.1 We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the **School** Improvement Plan.

## APPENDIX 1

### Looked After Children say...

- “I would like to have a say as to whether I move **school** or not.”
- “Money should not be the most important thing when deciding if I should moveschools.”
- “I would really like to have a chance to visit the **school** before I start.”
- “I would like my **school** work and achievements to be passed on to my new **school** and not forgotten about.”
- “I would have liked a buddy or peer mentor when I moved to my new **school** to help me get settled.”
- “We want to be treated as normal. We don’t want to be pitied or treated differently.”
- “I’d like to be able to choose a particular teacher to talk to – not just the designated teacher.”
- “I want to keep my life private. I don’t want people knowing everything about me unless I say so.”
- “I don’t want my teachers hearing embarrassing/personal details about me and my family at review meetings.”
- “I want my own copy of **school** reports and I want my parents to have a copy.”
- “The head of year is extremely important in passing on ‘need to know’ information to individual subject teachers.”

## APPENDIX 2 – PEP GUIDANCE

### (A) Initiating PEPs on Child's entry to care

- You will receive PEP from C&YPD with the first two pages completed. (**Personal Education Plan – Details p1&2**)
- Complete the education sections of the PEP (**PEP-Cumulative Record p3&4 and PEP-Plan p5&6**) in consultation with the social worker/carer/parents/child as appropriate.
- Discuss plan with child/young person. Encourage and record their comments in box on **p6**.
- Inform the school nurse that the young person has entered public care or that a young person in care has joined the school.
- Keep original completed PEP in child's **school file and use as a working** document.
- Take a photocopy of completed PEP and send to the Reviewing Team in the envelope provided within 20 school working days. The team will then distribute the PEP to all relevant people.

### (B) For Statutory Care Plan Review meetings

It is a statutory requirement that PEPs are reviewed every six months.

Before the Statutory Care Plan review, update the PEP by

- Recording any additions to the Cumulative Record p3&4
- Reviewing targets and actions from last PEP meeting (these will either be on the **PEP-Plan p5&6 or PEP-Plan/Review p7&8 form**)
- Completing a new PEP-Plan/Review p7&8. Be sure to record any changes here as well as setting new targets and record any comments from child/young person on p8.

Take copy of the PEP (and any attached information) to meeting or, if not attending, send it to the Reviewing Team.

Put a copy of the PEP- Plan/Review form (and any updated information) with the original PEP in the child/young person's school file.

#### **Also consider:**

If the child/young person has Special Educational Needs, you may wish to hold the PEP and IEP reviews together to minimise paperwork and time.

If child/young person moves school forward the completed PEP, including the review documents, along with the child's school file in the normal way to the receiving school.

For fuller explanations please refer to the DCSF "Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care".

**If you have any queries/problems please contact Margaret Maughan on 717100 in the reviewing team.**

**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011 by the Governors Pupils and Personnel Committee

**Signed:** Clare Cuomo Chair of Governors

**When Policy was discussed:** Governors Pupils and Personnel Committee Meeting 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011

**Date of Review:** January 2015 by the Governors Pupils and Personnel Committee

