



ST THOMAS
CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Looked After Children Policy 2021-2022

Policy Reviewed on:	February 2021
Policy approved by Governing Body on:	February 2021
Policy to be reviewed on:	February 2022

Policy for the Education of Children Looked After by the Local Authority

Definition

'Looked After' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of children looked after by the Local Authority. It was developed during the summer term of 2008 through a process of consultation with staff at the school. It was approved by the governing body and will be reviewed in 2022.

At St Thomas, a Church of England Controlled school, we believe the role of the school is to encourage, motivate and challenge all to achieve their full potential, whilst feeling safe and secure.

The school aims to maximise opportunity for every pupil to succeed. Children and young people who are looked after by local authorities are one of the groups most likely to under-achieve nationally. St Thomas (CE) VC Primary School recognises that Looked After Children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty. This school is committed to supporting looked after pupils to achieve their potential alongside other pupils, and to experience success in school.

Aims

- To work together with the Local Authority and Social Services in an effective partnership to ensure that the children's needs are met.
- To contribute to the provision of a successful and integrated service for children who are looked after by the Local Authority.
- To ensure that children who are looked after have equality of opportunity in school, enabling them to access, experience and benefit from education in the normal way alongside their peers, and respecting their wishes for anonymity, so that they are not identified as being different if this is their wish.
- To comply with the national and Local Authority guidelines on the education of looked after children and young people. (see Appendix 2).

Objectives

To achieve our aims, the school will:

- identify a designated teacher to coordinate the education of looked after children and act as a link to other agencies.

- ensure that staff are aware of any looked after children in school, know who the carer is, and whether parents have parental rights so they know who should receive copies of newsletters reports etc.
- liaise effectively with other agencies involved with the child and attend review meetings.
- work in partnership with carers, parents and others with parental responsibility to ensure that looked after children receive their entitlement (see Appendix 1).
- ensure that records and plans are kept and maintained appropriately.
- provide information to the Governing Body and Local Authority about the progress and outcomes of looked after pupils on the school roll.
- Secure training for the designated teacher or others as appropriate to ensure that the school can meet the needs of looked after pupils.

Confidentiality

- Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a “need to know basis”
- The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting.
- Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

This policy has been written in accordance with the Local Authority guidelines, approved by staff and governors, and will be next reviewed in 2022 unless Local Authority guidelines change prior to this.

Entitlement of looked after children

Looked after children are entitled to (LA Guidelines July 2004):

information

- a clear explanation of the roles and responsibilities of professionals involved.
- a copy of their Education plan if this is appropriate to their age and understanding.
- information about where they can go for support and advice.

respect

- an assurance of the greatest possible confidentiality.
- equal and appropriate treatment, at school and at home
- recognition of their achievements.

support

- high expectations from adults
- appropriate educational support in school
- appropriate educational support at home

access

- to a broad and balanced curriculum
- opportunities to make decisions about their education
- opportunities outside school to develop sporting, creative, social and artistic interests.

Roles and Responsibilities in School (LA Guidelines July 2013)

The Governing Body

Governors will fulfil their responsibilities to looked after children through:

- ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- nominating a governor to maintain interest in the well being of looked after children, liaise with the Head/Class teacher and report back periodically to the Governing Body.
- ensuring that the governing body takes up suitable training opportunities.
- monitor appropriate training for school staff.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher has day to day responsibility for the management and organisation of the school, and is the first point of contact for any matters relating to pupils.

The Head Teacher will fulfil her responsibility to looked after children through:

- ensuring that this policy is approved by the governing body and that it is reviewed on a regular basis.
- ensure that any practical guidelines needed to ensure the well being of any particular child are identified.
- to nominate a teacher (class teacher) to take pastoral responsibility and ensure the well being and education of the looked after child.
- to maintain a secure file for each looked after child, giving up to date admin details and info and defining clearly who should have access to which parts of the file:
- the legal position with regard to parental access.
- who should get school reports
- who are the Key workers and Carers
- sensitive reports relating to the child's past experiences
- any other relevant information

The Head Teacher should report periodically to the governing body on:

- admissions
- progress and achievement of looked after children
- significant behavioural issues eg acts of bullying either as victim or perpetrator
- level of attendance in relation to school averages

The Head Teacher should ensure appropriate training opportunities are taken up, and promote and maintain good working relationships with other key personnel in other agencies

The Designated Teacher (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The Designated Teacher will fulfil their responsibility to the looked after child through:

- liaising with the Head Teacher, SENCO, foster carer or other agency workers as requested to ensure a coherent approach.
- be aware of the Care Plan for each child.
- contribute to the development and maintenance of a Personal Education Plan in partnership with other relevant professionals.
- know who has parental responsibility for the child.

- know who are the primary carers.
- ensure that information is provided for those who are entitled to receive it.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- work sensitively with information to ensure that looked after children are not exposed to inappropriate or intrusive attention from staff or pupils.
- establish good relationships and lines of communication with key workers and foster carers.
- contribute to or attend meetings as requested.
- maintain an overview of the experiences and education of the child.
- participate in appropriate training to develop the skills and knowledge needed to support the looked after child and to disseminate this to colleagues.
- To keep abreast of National and LA Guidelines regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children.