St George's CE Academy

Protection of Looked After and Post-looked After Children Policy

Stand firm in faith,

Be courageous,

Be Strong,

Do everything in love.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Version: 1
Date of Next Review: October 2027

DND Learning Trust

Policy for the Protection of Looked After and Post Looked Children

Mark 10:16 *"And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them."*

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 policy includes:-

- Requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children (LAC).
- Requirements set out in 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018.

A child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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;

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.

Looked-after children 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 Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009 require that the designated person is:

- a qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school or;
- a head teacher or acting head teacher of the school.

Previously looked-after children Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 place duties on the governing body of a maintained school in England and the proprietor of an academy in England to:

- designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after pupils who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training;
- ensure they and the designated teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

St George's CE Academy

Designated Lead/Teacher for LAC: Mrs Sarah Cox Deputy Head/SENDCO/Deputy DSL

Deputy Designated Lead/Teacher for LAC Mrs Judith Skirving DSL/Headteacher

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The school recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the Academy Council endorse the Darlington County Council policy and welcomes LAC who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Darlington. Our approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of LAC is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all LAC.
- All LAC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Prioritising reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of LAC.

Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, LAC are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Nationally, LAC significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances. Only 6% go on to university. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school. Our academy trust recognises that LAC can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting, and is committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We are aware that LAC may have specific difficulties in transport and attendance, doing homework, getting parental consent for activities, obtaining funding for extra activities, obtaining correct uniform and equipment, as well as stigma about their circumstances. Our academy trust recognises that LAC may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

We believe that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Looked After Child can be successful. We believe that our schools have a major part to play in ensuring that LAC can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Responsibility of the Head teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for LAC, whose role is set out below.
- It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of LAC to all parties involved.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of the Academy Council

- Ensure that all Academy Councillors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC.
- Ensure that the school has an overview of the needs and progress of LAC.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of LAC are recognised and met.

The Academy Council should receive termly updates setting out:

1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
2. Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
3. Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

The role of the Designated Teacher

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 the Virtual School Head 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:

- ✓ they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;

- ✓ there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
- ✓ there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
- ✓ 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+;
- ✓ 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;

- ✓ 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;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
- ✓ believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
- ✓ can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, peer on peer abuse, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.

• Being a source of advice for teachers about:

- ✓ differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and

• Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or guardians to:

- ✓ promote good home-school links;
- ✓ support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
- ✓ ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and maths;
- ✓ 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.

The responsibility of all staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC, as for all pupils.
- Maintain LAC's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable LAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all LAC.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of LAC.

Confidentiality

Information on LAC 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.

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of LAC and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff. Our trust uses CPOMS to record information. A Personal Education Plan will be initiated within 20 school days of the Looked After Child or Young Person starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the LAC/YP. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure that all relevant parties are informed accordingly. Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition. It is vital that the Looked After Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Exclusions

We recognise that LAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a LAC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of LAC. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with LAC, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs. Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those LAC who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

Support and resources

The Academy Council will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Home-school liaison

We recognise the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Open evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Admission arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements LAC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognises that LAC are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise LAC in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Links with other agencies

We recognise the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After Child or Young Person including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. St George's CE Academy is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

There is conclusive evidence that this vulnerable group of children will require monitoring and supporting throughout their time in the school. The behavioural issues that can arise can be a serious distraction This now enshrined in case law (Supreme Court July 2018) It will now be harder for schools to exclude children with special educational needs and disabilities because they have a 'tendency to physically abuse'.

The outcome means, for the first time, schools must make appropriate adjustments for pupils with a violence linked condition before looking towards exclusion. These issues must never compromise the drive each child to succeed.

Monitoring and Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed annually. The next scheduled date for review is October 2027.