

St Anne's CE (Aided) Primary School



**Looked After Children Policy**  
**2018**

## **Rationale**

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children our school plays a pivotal role in this.

## **Definition** (taken from ‘*The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children- Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities*’ February 2018)

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked-after by a local authority if s/he is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- ⊗ children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20);
- ⊗ children who are the subject of a care order (section 31(1)) or interim care order (section 38); and
- ⊗ children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child (section 44).

Looked-after children are “accommodated” by the local authority under section 20 when:

- ⊗ there is no person who has parental responsibility for them;
- ⊗ the child is lost or abandoned;
- ⊗ the person who has been caring for him or her is prevented from providing him or her with suitable accommodation or care.

The local authority is also empowered to provide accommodation for any child if it will safeguard or promote their welfare.

The majority of children who are being accommodated by the local authority will be doing so with the full agreement of those who have parental responsibility for them. In practice, children are accommodated because there are particularly difficult family circumstances which mean that they cannot be cared for in their normal family environment. While they are accommodated, the child’s parents (or guardians) retain full parental responsibility and may, at any time, remove them from local authority provided accommodation.

Some looked-after children are the subject of a care order. If the local authority believes that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm” if they remain with their birth family, then they can apply to the courts for a care order to assume parental responsibility for the child. While it is possible that children on care orders live with their parents or other family members if that is what the courts decide, most will live with foster carers.

## **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.

## **St Anne’s School Commitment to Looked After Children**

The Designated Teacher for LAC is Mrs Sue Holt (Headteacher/DSL). She is supported by the Deputy Headteacher, Lee Bennett and the SENCo, Lyndsey Martin.

## **Admissions**

The Governing Body of St Anne's CE (Aided) Primary School will ensure that Looked After Children are prioritised in accordance with the school's admission procedures.

On admission, all records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held ASAP with carer/parent/Social Worker/Agencies. A date will be agreed for a Personal Education Plan meeting, taking reference to statutory timescales. An appropriate school induction will take place.

### **The Designated Teacher will:**

- Undergo any relevant training eg. knowledge of legislation/statutory expectations and cascade to staff;
- Ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by LAC/Post-LAC and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- Organise training for staff on specific issues eg. Attachment;
- Inform members of staff of the general educational needs of LAC/Post-LAC and to promote the involvement of these children in all activities, including extra-curricular;
- Act as an advocate for the children;
- Develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, Social Workers and Jenny Davis (Virtual Head for Oldham);
- Hold a supervisory brief for all LAC/Post-LAC eg. ensure all relevant education and care information is available and kept up to date;
- Monitor the progress of the children in order to inform the school's development and provision/intervention planning, thereby ensuring that the attainment 'gap' is closing;
- Have an overview of how specific resources (particularly the Pupil Premium Plus funding) are used to close the gap for each individual child;
- Intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement or absences;
- Report annually to the Governing Body and ensure that Governors are fully aware of how school is striving to maximise the potential of all LAC/Post-LAC;
- Attend all relevant meetings related to LAC/Post-LAC including network meetings with other Designated teachers in Oldham to share good practice;
- Work with IROs and outside agencies closely;
- Ensure that PEPs are completed and reviewed in collaboration with the Social Worker and other agencies;
- Enable the children to contribute to educational aspects of their Care Plan and PEP documents;
- Ensure there is positive communication and work closely with carers/parents of LAC/Post-LAC;
- Monitor and track progress. This will be looked at and linked to PEPs and use of the Pupil Premium funding. LAC/Post LAC will be tracked as a discrete, vulnerable group within whole school data;
- Promote the attendance of looked after children;
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Forward any relevant information on current attainment and progress to the Virtual School.

### **The Head Teacher will:**

- Appoint the designated teacher;
- Ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training;
- Oversee the development of the policy on looked after children;

- ⊗ Be responsible for all systems to support looked after children;
- ⊗ Report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
  - the number of looked after pupils in the school
  - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
  - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
  - any complaints

### **All staff:**

- ⊗ Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- ⊗ Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- ⊗ Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- ⊗ Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- ⊗ Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- ⊗ Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- ⊗ Be aware that 60% of Looked After Children say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

### **Governance**

The name of the Governor with responsibility for LAC/Post-LAC is Matt Walsh.

The Designated Governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that LAC/Post-LAC have equal access to

- ⊗ Full, broad and balanced curriculum
- ⊗ Extra-curricular activities
- ⊗ Additional educational support as required
- ⊗ Ongoing training to meet the needs of the LAC

### **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.

### **Record Keeping and Information Sharing**

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Looked After Children and Young People in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

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 child. 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.

### **Pupil Voice**

It is important that a child is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The

explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the child is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the PEP by the Designated Teacher to inform the PEP and Care Plan review meetings

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

## **Personal Education Plans**

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate. ePEPs are completed using the Welfare Call website.

The PEP will consider:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses;
- interests, both in and out of school;
- developmental and educational and pastoral needs;
- future plans, and how these can be supported;
- issues arising for the child;
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting;

## **Admission/Induction Arrangements.**

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the school's published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

## **School Trips and Special Activities**

Given the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extracurricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We recognise our duty to promote equality in line with the Equality Act 2010 which may mean that those with protected characteristics may be treated more favourably than others.

All governors and staff recognise our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- ⦿ Eliminate discrimination, bullying and harassment aimed at protected characteristics as defined in the Act.
- ⦿ Promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- ⦿ Promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

## **Complaints**

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond in line with school's procedure.

Any issue that remains unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the child's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend.