

Federation of St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools



The Education For Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Date policy reviewed by the Governing Body: Autumn 2025
Date policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2027



The School Governors Federation Ethos Statement

As Governors we acknowledge our responsibilities as strategic leaders to ensure every child, in St Charles' and St Mary's Schools, are given the best possible opportunities to reach their full potential, spiritually and academically. We do this by promoting high standards of educational achievement, pastoral care and by modelling of the Gospel values in both communities. We are strongly committed to building and strengthening the shared Catholic ethos of both schools whilst maintaining their individual identities.

We strive to build on the foundations of faith started at home and seek to provide an environment where beliefs and values of the Catholic faith are taught, explored, developed and nurtured. We aim for all our children to believe in their own potential, in an environment where they can flourish, succeed and achieve.

As a governing body we have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction which aim to deliver high expectations and to improve the lives and outcomes of all students.
- Holding the Executive Head Teacher and both Heads of School, to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for ensuring excellent quality of teaching.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

As governors, we bring a wide variety of experience and expertise to the schools, and this ensures that both schools move forward and standards are constantly raised in a way that is in line with the overarching ethos and vision of the schools, along with the statutory directives from the Department for Education and The Archdiocese of Westminster.

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. It also takes into account section 20 and section 20A of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children are registered students that are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours

Previously looked-after children are registered students that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result of any of the following:
 - A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
 - A special guardianship order
 - An adoption order
- They appear to have:
 - Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
 - Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these students as if they were

in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

Personal education plan (PEP)

The PEP is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

- The PEP forms part of the care plan and will be completed within 20 days when a new LAC is on the school roll. Thereafter the PEP should be done after 3 months and then at least 6 monthly
- The PEP will be shared with key staff who plan and deliver the support needed by the child
- The school recognises that it has a responsibility for making the PEP a living and useful document.
- The PEP will be updated at least 6 monthly with educational progress, current assessment levels, target levels and other key data
- Effective arrangements will be made for the speedy transfer of information such as the PEP on the transfer of a child to a new teacher or school.

Identity of our designated teacher

In each respective school, the Designated Teacher will be **the Assistant Headteacher and the Deputy DSL**.

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Role of the designated teacher

1. Leadership responsibilities the Designated Teacher are:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
 - Working with VSHs
 - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve

- How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- Work 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
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

The role of the Governing Body

- To ensure the appointment of a suitably qualified Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children (LAC). This role is currently held by the Head of school.
- To ensure the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- To review reports from the designated teacher given as appropriate.
- To receive and act on matters raised in the report in order to support the increased effectiveness of the designated teacher role.
- To identify a named governor who will liaise with the DT to ensure the implementation of this policy
- To review this policy annually

The responsibilities of others within the school

- The class teacher will regularly liaise with the DT regarding issues for LAC and provide targets and assessment information for the PEP
- The Head Teacher, SENCO and SLT meet regularly with the DT regarding the education of LAC at the school
- Subject/class teachers will seek advice and support from the DT as necessary
- All staff will attend appropriate training regarding LAC issues as required

Supporting looked-after children

The Designated Teacher will:

- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs
- Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for students
- Ensure that:
 - A looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered
 - PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced
 - The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- Transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning

- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place arrangements to ensure that looked after children have their wishes and feelings recorded, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

Relationships beyond the school

The Designated Teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:
 - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
 - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action
 - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption
 - Making sure that, if a looked-after child moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process

- Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
 - There's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
 - School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
 - Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion:
 - Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
 - Working with the VSH and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

12. Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 aims to prevent discrimination. It is illegal to discriminate against people based on nine **protected characteristics**:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race:
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

No form of discrimination is tolerated at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, but it is particularly important that children are taught about these protected characteristic groups and the importance of showing respect to people within these groups. We also ensure that our curriculum is planned and delivered in order that children learn about these protected characteristics in an age-appropriate manner.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Positive Behaviour Management
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- SEND
- Supporting students with medical needs
- Equal Opportunities
- Admissions