



St. Thomas More
CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Looked After Children Policy

Approved by	
Name:	Alison Pimblett
Position:	Assistant Headteacher
Signed:	<i>A Pimblett</i>
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The St Thomas More Mission:

We the St Thomas More family, 'aspire not to have more but be more'.

We aspire not to have the world but be more for the world.

#BeMore

We are **A**uthentic we seek to find our true vocation and who we really are

We are **S**acred we are loved and made in the image of God

We are **P**assionate we strive to grow and be our best selves

We are **I**nspirational what we do here can help us change the world

We are **R**esilient for our greatest learning comes when we make mistakes

We are **E**mpathetic we are called to care for all in our community and the world

Statement of Intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for 'Looked After Children' (LAC) and 'Previously Looked After Children' (PLAC) are of real concern. We are aware that pupils who are LAC and PLAC may have very specific needs and may be coping with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including trauma, loss, abuse or rejection. Therefore, these pupils are likely to experience emotional and academic difficulties, necessitating special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation. 75% of LAC and PLAC leave education with no formal qualifications. Only 12% go on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. Helping LAC and PLAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

St Thomas More 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 that meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and using the school's resources efficiently in order 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.

1. Legal Framework

1.1 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 (2017) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour and Exclusions Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2. Definitions

2.1 **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, as the local authority has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the local authority under an agreement with their parents.

2.2 **PLAC** are defined as:

- Children no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they 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).

3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

3.1 The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and PLAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC 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.
- 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 PLAC children.
- 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 PLAC 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 local authority.
 - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and IROs 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 PLAC.
- 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 PLAC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, 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.
- Championing LAC and actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

3.4 The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC (see Appendix 1) 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 PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school.
- Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff they can talk to. This may not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the young person's own wishes.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the education department.
- 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 personal education plan 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.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the student moves to another school.
- Working with the Headteacher to submit an annual report to the Governing Board, which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC.

3.5 The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and PLAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists, and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PLAC.

3.6 Staff are responsible for:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC, as for all students.
- Being aware of LAC and PLAC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.

- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Making reasonable adjustments for LAC and previously-LAC with regard to work and behaviour, while still maintaining high expectations.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and PLAC.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.

4. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

- 4.1 All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.
- 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 will work with other professionals and the child's carers to 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 local authority, 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:
 - On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
 - Suitable education provided by the local authority, 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.
 - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

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.
- 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 PLAC 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 PLAC 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 PLAC, 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 PLAC.

6. Training

- 6.1 The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and previously PLAC 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

7. Pupil Mental Health

- 7.1 LAC and PLAC 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 PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- 7.3 To regularly measure the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by LAC and PLAC, a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire will be used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC's emotional wellbeing. Teachers will regularly complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment when requested.

8. Exclusions

- 8.1 Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour and Exclusions 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 considered as a last resort; where exclusion is considered, the school will work with the VSH, and others, to consider what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements that can be made to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.
- 8.5 The school will inform carers that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

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, Head of Learning and designated teacher will involve carers 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.

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:
- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured.
 - 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.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the designated teacher and the Headteacher.
- 11.2 The next scheduled review date for this policy is May 2027.

APPENDIX 1

Contacts in school for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children:

Designated Teacher for LAC and P-LAC : Miss A Pimblett, Assistant Headteacher and DSL

Additional Designated Teachers for LAC and P-LAC : Mrs S Lancett, SENDCO