



**ST. HILD'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

**Education of Children Looked After and Previously Looked-After
Children Policy**

At St. Hild's Church of England School we aim to provide all of our pupils with a world class education in a Christian context. We expect to find God at work in our school.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

"I have come that they may have life in all its fullness (John 10:10)"

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Background

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care / children looked after and drew attention to:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled. All schools should have a policy for Children Looked After that is subject to review and approval by the Governing Body. The policy should set out not only the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of children looked after by a local authority but also the procedures that will ensure participation in high quality learning and progress.

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after children' (LAC) or children in care or 'children looked after' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school • With relatives, or
- Even with parents – under supervision of Children's Services

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children's home, or
- In a residential school

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004,

Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

Keeping children safe in education (September 2019)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830121/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_060919.pdf

Working together to safeguard children

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

The Hartlepool Policy Statement on Children Looked After.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the above and the following:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the **Virtual School Head** (VSH).

In Hartlepool, **Emma Rutherford is the Virtual School Head.**

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.

Policy Objective

The governing body of St Hild's Church of England School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises the need to champion welfare and performance, for children looked after (LAC) and previously looked after children (PLAC) and is committed to improving outcomes for them.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that LAC and PLAC are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

1. A Designated Governor for LAC and PLAC
2. An overall Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC
3. An identified member of staff in each Year group for LAC and PLAC – this is usually the Year Leader unless there is more than one child from the same family
4. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all LAC
5. The Designated Teacher, as a minimum, will have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of LAC and PLAC.
6. All staff in school will have a clear understanding of the issues that affect LAC and PLAC; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality.
7. Policies, procedures and strategies to promote the achievement and well-being of this vulnerable group.

Name of the Designated Teacher for LAC and Post LAC:

Mrs Tracey Gibson - Headteacher

Name of the Designated School Governor for LAC and Post LAC:

TBC

Name of the linked staff

Mr L Morgan	Year 7
Mr J Gibbon Hayes	Year 8
Mr L Stephenson	Year 9
Mrs L Hornby	Year 10
Mrs S Sotheran	Year 11 and Transition

At St Hild's Church of England School we will create an environment where children looked after (LAC) and children previously looked after (PLAC) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the **DfE Guidance Document for Designated Teachers - February 2018**.

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for LAC and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that LAC experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise. Our school community aims to champion the needs of LAC to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care.

Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The school will ensure that every LAC on roll has a Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals. The school will follow the practices of the identified virtual school and complete the required documentation (this may be an ePEP) to inform the Virtual School of the school's policy and practice, to account for the efficient and effective spend of the PP+ funding. The Designated Teacher will inform the school Governing Body as part of the annual report.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The governing body of this school will:

1. ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC and PLAC;
2. ensure that there is a named designated teacher for LAC and PLAC;
3. through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its LAC and PLAC (including how the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is used) and their level of progress;
4. be aware of whether the school has LAC and PLAC and how many (no names);
5. liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that the designated teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to LAC and PLAC;
6. ensure the designated teacher is able to access training needed to fulfil the role of designated teacher. Most Virtual School Heads agree that, as minimum, designated teachers should have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of LAC and PLAC;
7. support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of LAC and PLAC are met;
8. review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and PLAC will receive appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- School admission arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework

- GCSE options
- Managing behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future
- Safeguarding

The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC

1. The designated teacher is the central point of initial contact within St Hild's Church of England School. They ensure 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.
2. The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every LAC and PLAC on the school's roll. This involves, working with the Virtual School Head to promote the education of LAC and PLAC and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of these children matter and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
3. The designated teacher takes lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how LAC and PLAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
4. The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC by contributing to the development and review of whole school policies.
5. The designated teacher promotes a culture in which LAC and PLAC:
 - 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, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
6. The designated teacher is a source of advice for teachers about: differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are LAC or PLAC; and the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of LAC and PLAC, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.
7. The designated teacher appoints appropriate staff to work directly with LAC and PLAC and their carers, parents or guardians to: promote good home-school links; support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication; ensure they understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home; ensure they are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and encourages high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
8. The designated teacher has lead responsibility for the development and implementation of PEPs for LAC within school in partnership with others as necessary;
9. The designated teacher is responsible for ensuring that the PEPs are completed within statutory timescales and a copy is returned to the Virtual School Head as outlined in the PEP guidance.
10. The designated teacher works closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding LAC and PLAC are quickly and effectively responded to.

11. The designated teacher is aware that the Virtual School Head provides information and advice to parents and designated teachers on meeting the needs of PLAC. The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, including any requests to the Virtual School Head for advice on meeting their individual needs.

The Role and Responsibilities of all staff

All staff in this school will:

1. have high expectations of LAC and PLAC's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
2. be 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;
3. understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC 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;
4. appreciate the central importance of the 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;
5. have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;
6. for PLAC, 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.

Mental Health and Well-being

LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact upon their behaviour and education. Staff will have an awareness of this and the designated teacher and link staff will be trained to support the needs of LAC and PLAC to support them with their behaviour management and mental health. Where necessary, the school will prioritise the use of an ELSA (Emotionally Literate Support Assistant) or will make use of the Bridge or Space to Learn provision.

Special Educational Needs

All Staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for LAC and post LAC who have special educational needs by:

- adhering to graduated approach as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice
- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year (in line with the expectation set out in the PEP)
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Designated Teacher and SENDCO monitor delivery of interventions and review outcomes with LACss teacher
- where an EHCP is in place, PEPs and EHCP should be aligned to avoid duplication

Safeguarding

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on LAC and post LAC by: familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' document (September 2019), if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Alternative Provision

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision, alternative to daily attendance at school, will be:

- a plan that will retain the LAC on the roll of the school or LACrify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall PEP for the student
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the LAC or PLAC
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that PEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

Exclusion

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a LAC, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of LAC and PLAC. (Ref: DfE Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England: Statutory Guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion. September 2017)

Multi-Agency Working

School staff will engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This should include: Virtual Schools, Social Care, health, carers. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of LAC and PLAC.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Designated Teacher (Headteacher) and the identified link staff for LAC.

This policy was established, and approved for implementation by the full Governing Body

Signed.....(Headteacher)	Next Review Date: July 2020
Signed.....(Chair of Governors)	

Revision Date:	Version	Status (Annual)	Material/Reference/Bibliography