

LOOKED AFTER AND POST-LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

Author / reviewer responsible:	NM	Last amended:	May 2026
Authorisation by resolution of:	Governors	Date of authorisation:	-
		Date of next review:	September 2027

Introduction

This policy covers St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's approach to supporting Looked after Children (LAC) and Post Looked after Children (PLAC). Providing high quality academic, pastoral and spiritual support and guidance for this cohort of young people, who are often amongst the most vulnerable in our society, is central to our ethos as a school. In particular, we will endeavour to enable the Looked after Children and Post Looked after Children in our community to live life in all its fullness and grow into the people that they are called to be.

Definition

A student who has been in the care of their Local Authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child (LAC). Looked after Children are also often referred to as Children In Care. In general, Looked after Children are:

Living with foster parents or carers
Living in a residential children's home or
Living in residential settings like schools or secure units.

A student stops being looked after when they are adopted, have a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements Order, return home or turn 18. When this occurs, a student is then classed as being a Previously Looked after Child (Post LAC).

Statutory Requirements

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher – Statutory Guidance for School Governors (2009).

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).

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.

Aims

The overall aim of this policy is to promote the educational achievement and pastoral welfare of Looked after Children (LAC) and Previously Looked after Children (Post LAC) that are part of our school community.

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for LAC and Post LAC students and in promoting their academic, social, emotional and spiritual development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that we are sensitive to the barriers to learning that LAC and Post LAC students may experience.

Overall Objectives

- To provide a safe and secure environment where education is always central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of LAC and Post LAC students;
- To narrow the gap between the attainment of LAC and Post LAC students and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress;
- To use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact;
- For all LAC students to have a minimum of three Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress;
- For all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with one key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school;
- LAC students and their foster families to feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed into the community in recognition of the particular needs of this group.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to supporting LAC and Post LAC students throughout their time in the school. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the Leadership Team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role.

The current Designated Teacher for Looked after Children is Mr Nick Morrell, the Headteacher.

The Designated Teacher for Looked after Children will:

- track the progress of LAC and Post LAC students across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and feedback;
- ensure that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently;

- perform a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies;
- ensure effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School;
- develop expertise in the field of LAC and Post LAC provision, this will include attending regular training;
- promote a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for LAC and Post LAC students;
- regularly report to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of LAC and Post LAC students;
- continue to actively support Post LAC students and engage with their parents or carers;
- attend and contribute to ePEPs for all LAC students;
- and ensure that carers and care staff are engaged with the targets outlined in the ePEP.

All staff will support the education of LAC and Post LAC students by:

- attending training, as appropriate;
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher or LAC Manager;
- referring to the Designated Teacher or LAC Manager for advice, if required;
- and playing their part in creating a supportive culture and ensuring that LAC and Post LAC students benefit from any additional school-based support available.

Attendance

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of LAC and Post LAC students to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School as an early intervention.

Alternative Provision

If required, we will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision, alternative to daily attendance at school include:

- a plan that will retain the LAC student on the role of the school or clarify, in writing, which educational establishment will be responsible for reporting and accountable for the PP+;
- an agreed part of the overall ePEP for the student;
- full time (25 hours) (or contribution to full time) attendance of high-quality educational provision;
- meet the educational needs of the student;
- and will be monitored regularly and that ePEPs will include the school and the alternative provider.

Special Educational Needs

The school will endeavour to secure progress for LAC and Post LAC who have special educational needs by:

- adhering to the whole school approach as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice;
- having high expectations in terms of progress and support;
- 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;
- and, 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 PostLAC students. If there are any concerns, they will respond in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' document (2019).

Any safeguarding concerns will be logged on My Concern, and the LAC Manger will be aware of and be involved with the response to the concern.

Exclusion

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a LAC or Post LAC student, 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. We will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the Virtual School and any other relevant stakeholder. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion.

Multi-Agency Working

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