

## Looked After Child Policy

The aim of this policy is to promote educational inclusion for Looked After Children (LAC), to enable them to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them and to reach their full potential, both academically and personally.

### **Introduction**

St Matthew's Primary School is committed to providing quality education to all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. It is recognised nationally that there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared to their peers. We are committed to implementing the principles and practice outlined in "Guidance on the Education of Looked After Children" (May 2000) and section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Children who are 'looked after' may be "accommodated", "in Care" or "reprimanded/detained" as follows:

#### *Accommodated (section 20)*

This is a voluntary arrangement. Parents may be ill, missing, unable to cope, or there may be a Section 20 arrangement as the result of a Child Protection Plan negotiated with the family. The parent retains parental responsibility.

#### *In Care*

A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.

#### *Remanded/detained*

A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:

- An emergency protection order
- Removed by police using their powers of protection

- Remanded by a court following criminal charges

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a “need to know” basis
- The Designated Teacher will discuss information sharing 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.

### **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AT ST MATTHEW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL WILL:**

- Receive an appropriate level of monitoring and support
- Have access to the full range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

### **The Looked After Children Designated Teacher, Safeguarding Officer and Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Be advocates for Looked After Children
- Identify, arrange and/or deliver training to staff to enable the above to take place
- Ensure the development of effective and inclusive strategies to address the needs of Looked After Children
- Ensure transition arrangements between year groups are planned on an individual basis to minimise emotional trauma
- Ensure the smooth transfer of information within school and between school, carers and other agencies

### **THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

**THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LAC IS VICTORIA RAYNER**

The Designated Teacher will:

- When new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible. This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;

- Ensure that each child in public care (if they wish) has an identified member of staff that they can talk to (this should be based on the child's request, and may not necessarily be the Designated Teacher);
- Co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- Ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- Ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents' evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive.
- Encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- Ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded
- Ensure that any returns on looked after children are completed – as requested by the LA

The Designated Teacher is fully supported in these roles and responsibilities by the Safeguarding Officer (Sandie Gonsalves) and the Assistant Head for Inclusion (Natalie Crawford).

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All staff at St Matthew's Primary School will:

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- Be familiar with the policy and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;

- Contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- As with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- As with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- Positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

The governing body of this school will:

- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (anonymous data shared);
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- Liaise with the Co-Headteachers to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children;
- Support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;
- Nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons). **The nominated Governor for LAC is Lesley McCullagh.**
- Review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

### **TRAINING**

The Co-Headteachers or the Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy and that teachers of Looked After Children have the professional development and support needed to ensure children succeed at school.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Written by Victoria Rayner

Deputy Headteacher and LAC Designated Teacher

March 2022

Policy ratified by Governors: March 2022

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'Paul Thomas'. The signature on the right is more stylized and appears to read 'Victoria Rayner'.

**Signed: Co-Headteachers**

The image shows a single handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style, which appears to read 'Lesley McCullagh'.

**Signed: Chair of Governors**

**Policy to be reviewed: Spring term 2023**