

St. Mary's and St. Benedict's RC Primary School



CHILDREN LOOKED-AFTER (CLA) AND POST LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (POST-CLA) POLICY

*'With Jesus, we learn as a joyful family and flourish to be the
best that we can be.'*

1. Introduction

St. Mary's and St. Benedict's Primary School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. This policy is written following the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, issued under sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. This means that the governing body and the designated staff member must have regard to it when promoting the educational attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

At St. Mary's and St. Benedict's Primary School, we are committed to providing quality education for all our pupils.

This policy includes the requirements set out in *"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"* (Nov 2005). It also relates to associated guidance on the education of children who are looked after (CLA) and children who are post-CLA, such as *'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'* (Department for Education 2018)

The Governing Body of St. Mary's and St. Benedict's Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Governing Body recognises that, nationally, there is educational underachievement of Looked after children, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance¹. The Children Act places a duty to safeguard Looked After children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential".

2. Definitions:

Children Looked-After (CLA) or Post Looked-After Children (Post CLA) are defined by:

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' (CLA) is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales; and

¹ "The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children." and "The Children and Young Persons Act 2008."

- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- children who are compulsorily accommodated — this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be 'Children Looked After'-CLA. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

3. Aims

We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

At St. Mary's and St. Benedict's Primary School, our aims are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CLA and Post-CLA as for all children
- ensure that all CLA and Post-CLA have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability

- ensure that CLA and Post-CLA pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of CLA pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that CLA pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

4. Admissions

The Governing Body endorses council policy. The Council believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against CLA pupils. Due to care placement changes, CLA may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary, we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

5. Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad curriculum. Our CLA policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all CLA and Post-CLA pupils.

6. Monitoring the progress of CLA and Post-CLA

The social worker for the CLA should initiate a *Personal Education Plan* within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved.

It is vital that the school assesses each CLA's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. CLA will require their *Personal Education Plan* to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher² and/or Family Link and noted on the plan. This review should occur termly.

Learning progress and achievement of CLA and Post-CLA pupils will be monitored through school's usual practice, including assessment, teacher assessment and work scrutinies. The Designated Teacher will ensure that the learning progress of CLA and Post-CLA are monitored specifically, as part of the school's monitoring cycle.

7. Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the CLA in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any CLA from other authorities. It is important that the school flags CLA status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

² A teacher should be designated to the CLA or Post-CLA to ensure continuity of care.

8. Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support CLA. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with CLA.

9. Partnership with Parents/ Carers or Care Workers

At our school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable CLA to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this working partnership.

10. Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting CLA.

Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual CLA:

- CLA Teams
- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical Officers
- School Nurses
- CAMHS
- Social Care Worker/ Community Care Worker/ Residential Child Care Worker

Date of Policy: January 2021

Date Review Due: January 2022 (or sooner if appropriate)