

# St Richard's Catholic College

## LOOKED-AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN POLICY



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: September 2023

Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

The Governing Body will review the policy in September 2024

## Looked After Children Policy (LAC)

A child 'looked-after by a Local Authority' 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 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.

*'Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEND). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases, the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning. Excellent practice in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children already exists in many schools. The Designated Teacher role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice becomes universal.*

*Attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non-looked-after children.*

*The support that schools and Designated Teachers give to children who are looked-after and previously looked-after should not be seen in isolation. All looked-after and previously looked-after children will have a wide range of support mechanisms that will assist in promoting their educational achievement. The child's foster carer (or residential care worker), social worker or, for previously looked-after children, parents or carers, will have day-to-day responsibilities for the child. Within the Local Authority, the VSH (Virtual School Head) will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the school.'*

In carrying out its Mission Statement, St Richard's welcomes all 'in the spirit of Christian love and respect, enabling all to flourish and grow together.' It is in this atmosphere that we expect all pupils, including looked after and previously looked after children, to thrive. All pupils are encouraged to recognise and develop their talents and abilities and are helped to foster personal and moral attitudes helpful to the wellbeing of a just and caring society.

### **The role of the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children**

The Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children (LAC) is Abi Hills, who works closely with the Pastoral Support Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead, Emma Dann, with key responsibilities for LAC and previously LAC pupils. Her responsibilities include:

- LAC reviews are now called My Voice Matters meetings (MVM).
- Keeping a register of children who are looked-after and previously looked-after.
- Being a central point of initial contact within school to ensure that arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

- Working with Virtual Schools, social care and other external agencies as appropriate to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- Take lead responsibility for promoting an ethos of high expectations about what looked-after children and Previously looked-after children can achieve.
- Take lead responsibility in ensuring transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing any progress—e.g. moving onto post-16 education providers or because of a change in placement.
- Ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within school in partnership with others as necessary.
- Ensure the Special Educational Needs (SEN) of children are assessed, addressed and reviewed -using the PEP or PEP and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) together.
- Providing help and guidance regarding the needs of LAC.
- Liaise with the PP Lead (Peter Tadros) for funding.
- Contributing to statutory LAC reviews held by the Social Care and Health Department.
- Attending appropriate training and reporting back to staff.
- Being a point of contact for performance data and attendance data required by the Virtual School.
- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage.
- Working closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead / Pastoral Support Manager to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- When supporting previously looked-after children, the Designated Teacher and Pastoral Support Manager liaises with the VSH who must provide information and advice to parents and Designated Teacher on meeting the needs of these children.
- Ensure there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend events).
- Work closely with Virtual Schools to try to prevent suspension (Fixed Term (FTE)) or Permanent Exclusions (PEX) and to maximise attendance.
- Ensure that all looked-after and previously looked-after children are considered for exam arrangements and assessed where appropriate so they receive the maximum support.
- Ensure that there is appropriate guidance and aspirational support in relation to GCSE option choices.
- Prioritise looked-after and previously looked-after children for residential trips and any other trips/in or outside the setting, clubs and activities and other opportunities that they would benefit from taking part in.

The Designated Governor for Looked-after and previously looked-after children is Mrs Alison Horan who monitors the effectiveness of the policy and the use of the pupil premium for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

## **Monitoring**

1. Regular monitoring and liaison with all corporate parents and other agencies will be necessary between PEPs to ensure the needs of the looked-after and previously looked-after children are being addressed and dealt with appropriately.
2. The Designated Teacher and Pastoral Support Manager will monitor the Personal Education Plan by having regular discussions with the Pastoral Leader.
3. The Designated Teacher and Pastoral Support Manager will establish clear lines of communication which enable teachers and the relevant staff to be notified as quickly as possible of any incidents or changes in the Care Plan that may affect the child.
4. Any necessary alterations to the LAC's PEP will be made following consultation with all relevant parties - eg. carer, social worker.

All staff at St Richard's will work to secure positive educational outcomes for children who are looked-after or previously looked-after.

St. Richard's work with parents / carers to ensure the needs of children are assessed, addressed and reviewed – using personalised plans, specifically the Additional Needs Plan or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), depending on the level of need.

## **Counselling and Confidentiality**

A counselling relationship is based on trust. When I meet with a young person I make a contract with them. Part of this contract concerns confidentiality - our agreement is that I will break confidentiality **only if** they tell me that either they or someone close to them is being seriously harmed or at risk of being seriously harmed, or if they disclose they are involved in drug money laundering or terrorist activities. In order for the trust to build in our relationship it is imperative that confidentiality is maintained, particularly as many young people choose not to inform their parents/carers that they are having counselling.

Please allow pupils to attend their appointments; if there is a problem, please contact the Attendance Officer or myself ([mrsblackfordh@strichardscc.com](mailto:mrsblackfordh@strichardscc.com)) and I will reschedule the appointment.