

St John Baptist (Southend) CE Primary School



POLICY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Agreed: March 2014

Review Date: March 2019

By: Curriculum and Pupil Welfare Committee

St John Baptist (Southend) CE Primary School

Policy for Looked After Children

St John Baptist (Southend) Primary School fully recognises the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm. At St John's we will be guided by Christian principles and act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the children and the school. The school and the Governing Body will be open about decisions made and actions taken, and will be prepared to explain decisions and actions to interested persons.

At St John's we believe that Looked After Children (LAC) are vulnerable and at risk of not being able to access the benefits of involvement in the school community. It is therefore necessary for us to promote the achievement of such vulnerable children and to monitor the effects of this policy on LAC's in our school.

THE POLICY

a) The Objectives of the Policy

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children.

b) Definition of Looked After Children

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 authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked after' 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 in 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 home
- with relatives, or

- even with parents – under the supervision of the Social Services Department. Children and Young people’s Directorate

Similarly, an ‘accommodated’ child can be living:

- in foster care
- in a children’s home
- in a residential school
- or even, very unusually, with parents.

c) The Named Teacher for Looked After Children

This is Emma Mitchell, our SENCO/Inclusion Manager.

d) The Role of the Named Teacher

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by ‘looked after children’ and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are looked after, and to promote the involvement of these children in school, homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc.
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children being looked after, eg to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date.
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked after in the school.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with education, carers and the Social Services Department (SSD) for reporting and recording absence from school and by acting to address these issues through early and positive intervention.

Work with individual Looked After Children

- To work with individual children, possibly through a carer, to arrive at a statement about their circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils.
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan.
- To ensure that each pupil has an Inclusion Passport, if appropriate.

- To ensure that each pupil has a PEP (Personal Education Plan) and it is regularly reviewed.

Liaison

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children with a Child Protection Plan.
- To co-ordinate education and SSD review meetings, so that any Inclusion passports can inform the child's Care Plan.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to SSD's care planning meetings.
- To be the named contact for colleagues in Education and SSD.
- To report on the progress of all looked after children to Education.
- To liaise with the Virtual School to request pupil premium funding.

Training

- To develop knowledge of SSD/Education procedures by attending training events.
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.

e) Role of Nominated Governor

The nominated Governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of looked after pupils in the school.
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils.
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The level of fixed term exclusions. (In Lewisham schools no LAC should be permanently excluded)
- Pupil destinations.

The nominated governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked after pupils have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Additional Educational Support

f) Responsibility for LAC in School

All teaching staff in contact with the child should be made aware that s/he is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information is the responsibility of the Head of School/named person. Classroom Support Assistants, who work directly with the child, should also be made aware of the looked after status of the child.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The designated teacher should determine the extent of the sharing of information.

g) Admission Arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school. A meeting will be held with carer/Social Worker as appropriate to complete basic information and to inform the pupil's PEP and clarify contact arrangements.

A home/school agreement will be drawn up with the primary carer. An appropriate school induction will take place.

h) Involving the Child

It is important that the child is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances – how this is shared with them will depend on their age and understanding. The emphasis will be placed on the school and their carers working together to promote their welfare and education.

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know.

i) Communication with Other Agencies

Ideally, the Social Worker and the designated teacher for 'Looked After Children' should meet when the child becomes looked after or when they join the school – this will enable information concerning the child's progress and circumstances to be shared. The school will ensure that copies of all reports are forwarded to the child's Social Worker in addition to the foster carer or residential social worker.

j) Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures

Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance
- Achievement Record (academic and otherwise)
- Behaviour
- Homework
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities
- Relationship to Care Plan
- Special Needs (if any)
- Development Needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Long term plans and aspirations

Liaison will be undertaken with Education Welfare/Education Psychology/Social Services, etc in the assessment and review processes as appropriate.