

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation

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REVIEW FEBRUARY 2023

Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

In our Church of England Federation, we take strength in collaboration, yet celebrate uniqueness. As schools, we may be small, but together we develop children ready to make their mark on the world. We welcome the child yet embrace the whole family. We celebrate our rural environment yet aspire to look beyond our boundaries. We strive for knowledge and gratefully accept opportunities that come our way. We all take a pride in our Federation as we follow in Jesus's example.

Contents	Page
Introduction	3
The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	3
Roles and Responsibilities of all Members of Staff	5
Role and Responsibilities of the Governing Body	5
Review	6

Introduction

We believe that if our most vulnerable pupils feel safe and nurtured and are well supported and encouraged in their learning (as Jesus cared for his lambs and carried them upon his shoulder) then they will be enabled to “Be the best they can be.” We feel that if our most vulnerable pupils are flourishing then our schools are flourishing.

This policy sets out St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation’s (which is referred to as the Federation in the rest of this document) approach to supporting both Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children. The policy is informed by the following Department for Education (DfE) document:

The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_lookedafter_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf (DfE February 2018)

The Governing Body is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The Governing Body recognises the need to champion performance of Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and is committed to improving outcomes for them. The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that LAC and PLAC are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

1. A Designated Governor for LAC and PLAC
2. A Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC
3. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all LAC
4. All members of staff in our Federation schools will have a clear understanding of the issues that affect LAC and PLAC; their learning needs; how to support them in their school and issues relating to confidentiality.
5. Policies, procedures and strategies to promote the achievement and wellbeing of this vulnerable group.

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

1. The Designated Teacher is the central point of initial contact within our Federation schools. They ensure that our schools play their role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child’s learning.
2. The Designated Teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every LAC and PLAC on our school’s rolls. This involves, working with the Virtual School Team to promote the education of LAC and PLAC and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning

needs of these children matter, and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

3. The Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for ensuring Federation members of staff understand the things which can affect how LAC and PLAC learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
4. The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC by contributing to the development and review of whole Federation policies.
5. The Designated Teacher promotes a culture in which LAC and PLAC;
 - are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
 - are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to one tuition, and that they have access to mentoring support from their Class Teacher.
 - are encouraged to participate in their schools' activities and in decision making within their school
 - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
6. The Designated Teacher is a source of advice for Teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are LAC or PLAC,
7. The Designated Teacher works directly with LAC and PLAC and their carers, parents or guardians to: promote good home-school links; support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication; ensure they understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home; ensure they are aware of how their school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and encourages high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
8. The Designated Teacher has lead responsibility for the development and implementation of PEPs for LAC within our schools in partnership with others as necessary;
9. The Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the PEPs are completed within statutory timescales and a copy is returned to the Virtual School Team as outlined in the PEP guidance.
10. The Designated Teacher ensures that the Federation's schools spend the allocated Pupil Premium Plus Grant for the benefit of the LAC and PLAC cohort and can account for the impact of this grant on the outcomes for the cohort.

11. The Designated Teacher works closely with the Federation's Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding LAC and PLAC are quickly and effectively responded to.
12. The Designated Teacher is aware that the Virtual School Team can provide information and advice to parents and Designated Teachers on meeting the needs of PLAC. The Designated Teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education and must gain authorisation from parents to discuss their child with the Virtual School Team for advice on meeting their individual needs.

Roles and Responsibilities of all Members of Staff

All members of staff in this Federation will:

1. Have high expectations of LAC and PLAC's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
2. Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
3. Understand how important it is to see LAC and PLAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their Looked After or Previously Looked After status;
4. Appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between Teachers, carers, Social Workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
5. Have the level of understanding they need of the role of Social Workers, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;
6. For PLAC, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body

The Governing Body of our Federation will:

1. Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC and PLAC;
2. Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC;

3. Ensure that the Federation's schools have a policy outlining how they plan to spend the Pupil Premium Plus Grant for LAC and PLAC, including plans for any pooling of the funding;
4. Through the Designated Teacher, hold the Federation's schools to account on how it supports its LAC and PLAC (including how the Pupil Premium Plus is used) and their level of progress;
5. Be aware of whether the Federation's schools have LAC and PLAC and how many (no names);
6. Liaise with the Federation's Headteachers to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her responsibilities in relation to LAC and PLAC;
7. Ensure the Designated Teacher is able to access training needed to fulfil the role of Designated Teacher;
8. Support the Federation's Headteachers, Designated Teacher and other members of staff in ensuring the needs of LAC and PLAC are met;
9. Review the effective implementation of this Policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.

The name of our appointed Designated Governor is: Zoe Holland

The name of our Federation's Schools Designated Teacher is: Sophie Levey

Review

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than annually. The Governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Governing Body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. The policy review will be undertaken by the Federation's Headteachers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Inclusion Governor and the Governing Body's Policies Working Party.