



St Michael's C E Primary

Looked After Children Policy

“We are the seeds. Our school is the good ground which provides everyone with all they need to grow and achieve.” *(Our children)*

St Michael's is a Church of England Primary School built on distinctive Christian Values at the very heart of its community.

We will provide:

- a welcoming, inclusive school with strong relationships across our community, that celebrates diversity;
- excellent teaching with a nurturing approach, guiding first steps to next steps;
- an inspirational and challenging curriculum which ignites curiosity, encourages resilience and grows confidence so children become lifelong learners;
- a happy, safe and stimulating environment in which children can achieve their full potential;
- So that our children will flourish in all they do and become good citizens

**“And some seed fell on good ground. This seed grew and made 100 times more grain.”
*(Luke 8:8)***

1. Rationale

St Michael's CE Primary School believes that in partnership with Northumberland County Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children.

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.

- To support our looked after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.

- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

- To ensure that Pupil Premium Plus is used effectively for maximum impact on individual looked after children's achievement.

2. Definition

The term "looked after" was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child's welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full time basis.

Furthermore, the term "looked after", which is widely used in social services is synonymous with the term "in public care", which has been adopted by the DfES in their publication, "The Education of Young People in Public Care".

3. Legal Framework

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of looked after children. Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and trancies for all looked after children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the
- rights of looked after children
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of looked after children

4. Objectives

We will:

- Work alongside social workers and the Virtual School to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
- Provide a climate of Inclusion, acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extracurricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they disseminate this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the LA's Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education and Skills / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

5. Roles and Responsibilities All governors and staff will:

- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children

Many looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will work in a compassionate way with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However we do acknowledge that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all looked after children have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with looked after children.

6. The named Governor should be satisfied that :

- the school has a coherent policy for looked after children
- the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfE guidelines
- the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- the Governing body receives an annual report

7. The Head Teacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher
- ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- oversee the development of the policy on looked after children
- be responsible for all systems to support looked after children · report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in the school
 - an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints

8. The Designated Teacher (*who may be the Head Teacher*)

The designated teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school. The Designated teacher will:

- Maintain an up to date record of all Looked After Children who are on the school roll. This will include:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
 - SEND
 - Child Protection information when appropriate.
 - Baseline information and all test results.
 - Attendance figures

· Exclusions

Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan for each child/young person to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Education Health and Care Plan and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.

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Complete the Pupil Premium Plus agreement (within the PEP) to ensure that maximum funding is acquired to support progress and achievement.

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Ensure that someone attends Children's Services Reviews on each child/young person and/or always prepares a written report which promotes the continuity and stability of their education.

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Liaise with the Virtual School's Education Support Service for Looked After Children (ESLAC) on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of Looked After Children.

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Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.

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Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Looked After Children are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.

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Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Looked After Children where and when appropriate.

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Ensure that Looked After Children, along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.

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Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of Looked After Children.

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Report to the Governing body annually on the performance of the looked after children who are on the role of the school.

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The Designated Teacher at St Michael's CE Primary School is Mr G Johnston (Head Teacher).

9. Personal Education Plans

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate. The PEP will consider:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses
- interests, both in and out of school
- developmental and educational and pastoral needs
- future plans, and how these can be supported
- issues arising for the child
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

10. Admission/Induction Arrangements

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LA's and Diocesan guidance for the published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

11. School Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

12. Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

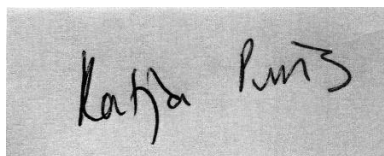
If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head teacher's response.

This document was agreed by:

Chair of Governor

Signed:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katja Purvis".

Print Name:Katja Purvis.....

Date:..... ..20th March 2023.....

Head teacher

Signed:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Johnston".

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Print name:..... ..Gavin Johnston.....

Date:20th March 2023.....

REVIEW DATEMarch 2024

