



St Nicholas Priory CEVA Primary School

'I did not come to be served but to serve.' Matthew 20.28

Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

AIMS – STATEMENT OF INTENT

St Nicholas Priory School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, continuity and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable and to make outstanding progress from what they are currently already able to do.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and are enjoying a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan realistically and using the school's resources efficiently in order to ensure the school meets the needs of all children.
- Promote a positive approach in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.
- To promote the educational achievement and welfare of children looked after on the roll of the school.

ELIGIBILITY

This policy applies to all looked after children attending St Nicholas Priory School. Looked after children will be given the highest priority within school admission arrangements. We understand that Fair Access Protocol does NOT apply to looked after children.

SCOPE OF THE SCHEME

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Children Act 1989
- The PEPning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Childcare Act 2004.
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children DfE 2018.
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

- The Children and Families Act 2014.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2019 – DfE.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE 2019.
- Promoting the education of looked after children DfE 2018
- Exclusions from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England DfE 2017.

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the school's:

- Roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for LAC.
- Admissions Policy.
- Code of Conduct.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Home School Agreement.
- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

2. Definitions

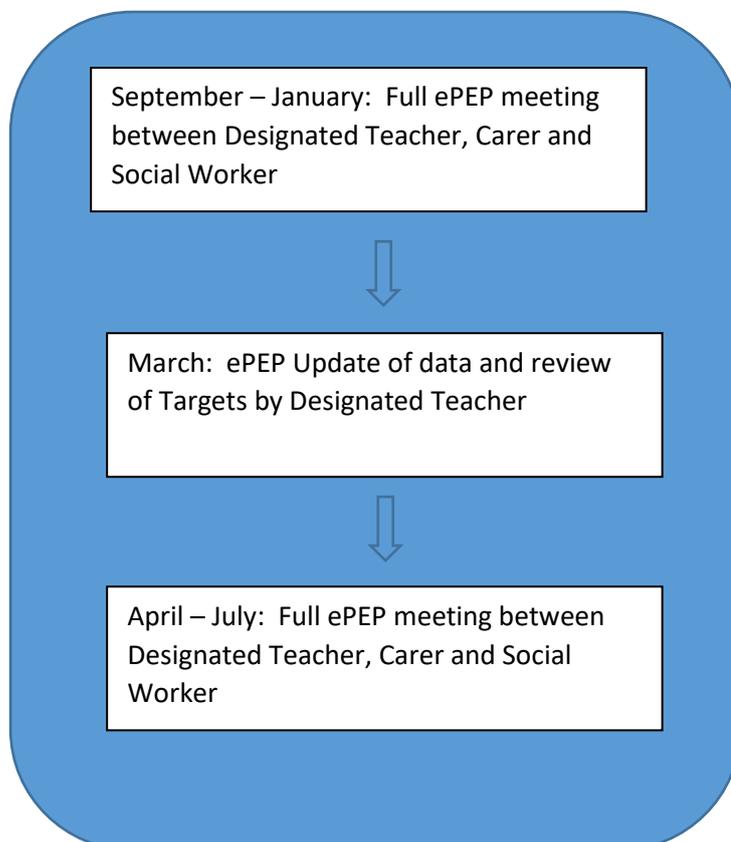
- 2.1. Looked after children (LAC) are defined as, children or young people who are subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- 2.2. This definition applies to children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- 2.3. If a child is subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, they are classed as looked after, since the LA has parental responsibility.
- 2.4. Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents, are regarded as looked after.
- 2.5. Previously LAC are defined as: Children who are no longer looked after by a LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement

3. Personal education plans (PEPs)

- 3.1. Every looked after child must have a Care Plan and the PEP is integral which is used to support the child in fulfilling their educational potential. It will be developed by the Social Worker and Designated Teacher.
- 3.2. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for the child to enable them to make their expected progress.
- 3.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

- 3.4. All the relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher, carers and other teachers, will work with the child in creating the PEP.
- 3.5. The PEP will include access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- 3.6. On-going, catch-up support will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- 3.7. If a child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion, suitable education will be provided by the LA.
- 3.8. If a child is moving to a new school, transitional support will be provided and will be factored into their PEP.
- 3.9. Support will be provided to help the child meet their aspirations, including:
 - School attendance and behaviour support where appropriate.
 - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national curriculum key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
 - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about further education, training and employment as relevant.
- 3.10. The PEP will include extended services such as after school clubs, study support and leisure interests.
- 3.11. Support will be provided for improving attendance and behaviour.
- 3.12. The school will ensure that transition into school is as smooth as possible in order to meet the needs of the LAC.
- 3.13. The PEP will be updated and reviewed each term **OR** at the point of any major change and contributes to the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by the Independent Reviewing Officer.

The annual ePEP Process



When a child is new to care the ePEP cycle will continue following on from their first ePEP meeting.

4. The Designated Teacher

- 4.1. Under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, all maintained schools are required to have a designated teacher for looked after children. The designated teacher at St Nicholas Priory is **Mr Dan Rust**. **Mrs Roz Hazell** is the key worker for LAC. The governor for LAC is **Mr Mike Ward**.
- 4.2. The primary duty of the designated teacher is to promote the educational achievement of looked after children at the school. This includes Previously LAC.
- 4.3. It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure the designated teacher has received adequate training for the role. There will be a link governor for LAC children.
- 4.4. The designated teacher will submit a report to the governing body at least annually which details the progress of looked after children.
- 4.5. The designated teacher will work with the key worker for LAC to:
 - ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and wherever possible, accelerated and promoted including LAC and previously LAC;
 - ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan or ePEP with SMART targets that will promote progress;
 - advise on most effective use of the core Pupil Premium during the PEP meeting;
 - ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and any additional funding, including Pupil Premium Plus (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how the funding is spent and able to produce evidence of good progress and outcomes. Pupil Premium Plus will be managed by the school through working with the VSH;
 - ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people 'in care' including a basic knowledge of attachment and trauma on behaviour and learning and understanding of the need for positive systems of support within the school, to overcome them;
 - actively inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc.;
 - ensure that members of staff who teach the children looked after on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the target setting at the Personal Educational Planning meeting;
 - act as an advocate for children and young people in care;
 - develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in Children's Services and birth parents where appropriate;
 - hold a supervisory brief for all children in care on roll, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff where relevant and carer (s), and that this information is kept up to date, used on a need to know basis to help the student overcome obstacles to learning and to make good progress;
 - track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to inform the School Improvement Plan;
 - intervene quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium funding to accelerate progress;
 - intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy;
 - ensure that the educational targets within the PEP are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them;
 - report to the Local Governing Body at least on an annual basis on the outcomes for children looked after.
 - attend training as appropriate;
 - ensure that school staff have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on learning;

- support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after.
- Keep up to date records of LAC respective social worker and VSH. Where a child ceases to be looked after and become a care leaver, keeping up to date contact details of their LA Adviser and liaising with the social worker

Work with Individual Children Looked After to:

- discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils;
- enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan;
- ensure that the Pupil Voice section of the Norfolk Personal Education Plan/ePEP is completed for each child and is the result of a one to one meeting so that the views of the student are faithfully represented in the PEP;
- ensure that a Home-School Agreement is drawn up with the primary carer and signed by the Social Worker;
- supervise the smooth induction of a new child looked after into the school;
- develop in-school strategies to track, promote and accelerate the achievement of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers;
- fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

Liaison to:

- liaise with the member of school staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Plan;
- develop effective communication with Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan or ePEP is congruent with the child's Care Plan;
- attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to PEPning meetings and statutory reviews;
- be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services and the DfE;
- ensure the speedy transfer of information between schools, agencies and individuals, and report on the progress and attendance of all children in care on the school roll to the Virtual School as requested – Progress and attainment data submitted each term.
- Build relationships with health education and social care partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and previously LAC

Training to:

- develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training events organised by Children's Services or the Virtual School including:
 - School admissions
 - SEN
 - Attendance
 - Exclusions
 - Homework
 - Behaviour
 - Safeguarding
 - Aspirations
- cascade training to school staff as appropriate.
- keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE, other research or policy.

5. Governors roles and responsibilities

5.1 The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Children Looked After in the school: Mike Ward.

5.2 The role of that governor on behalf of the governing body

The named governor will report to the Board of Governors on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of looked after pupils in the school;
- A comparison of progress as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
- A comparison of attainment measures as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils in school and nationally;
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils;
- The number of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations after leaving the school.

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

- Full time educational provision – at least 25 hours;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress e.g. One to One tuition
- Employment Excellence careers guidance;
- Additional education support;
- Extracurricular activities;
- Work experience;
- The most effective use of the Pupil Premium to raise attainment.

The named Governor is encouraged to support the Quality Assurance Process for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with children looked after to ensure and confirm the schools' best practice by:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and previously LAC
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC has received appropriate training
- Ensuring appropriate staff have the necessary information
- Ensuring staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding To keep LAC safe
- Ensuring LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made if necessary
- Revising the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school
- Ensure they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis

6. The virtual school head is responsible for

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of previously-LAC as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
 - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
 - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
 - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
 - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
 - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
 - Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
 - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

7. Pupil mental health

7.1 LAC and previously-LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

7.2 The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously-LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

7.3 A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used on a termly basis to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC and previously-LAC's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

8. Exclusions

8.1 Past experiences of LAC and previously-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.

8.2 The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any LAC.

- 8.3 Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.4 Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the school and VSH have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the pupil's education in the event of exclusion.
- 8.5 The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

9. Pupils with SEND

- 9.1 Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and PEP reviews.
- 9.2 The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- 9.3 If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-LAC.

10. Information sharing

- 10.1 Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met.
- 10.2 The arrangements set out include:
 - Who has access to information on LAC and previously LAC and how data will remain secure.
 - How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
 - How carers contribute to and receive information.
 - Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
 - How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

11. Working with agencies and the VSH

- 11.1. The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the looked after children's social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- 11.2. The school will co-ordinate their review meetings, for example, hold their annual review of looked after children with their statutory care review.
- 11.3. The school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues taking prompt action where necessary to safeguard the LAC and previously LAC.
- 11.4. The school will work closely with the virtual school head for Norfolk LAC to ensure that challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way.

12. Headteacher responsibilities

- 12.1. It is the responsibility of the headteacher to oversee this policy and monitor its implementation, feeding back to the governing body.
- 12.2. The headteacher will make all members of staff aware that the support of looked after children is a key priority, or will delegate this responsibility to the designated teacher.
- 12.3. The headteacher will allow the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- 12.4. The headteacher and designated teacher will lead in actively challenging negative stereotypes of looked after children.
- 12.4. The headteacher will appoint the designated teacher for LAC and previously LAC.

13. Staff responsibilities in Supporting Looked After Children

- 13.1. Staff will be aware of looked after children and previously looked after children in their classes and provide them with support and encouragement in order for them to make progress in line with the rest of the cohort.
- 13.2. Staff will preserve confidentiality and show sensitivity and understanding.
- 13.3. Staff will be vigilant for signs of bullying towards LAC and previously LAC.
- 13.4. Staff will promote the self-esteem of LAC and previously LAC.

14. SENDCo responsibilities

- 14.1 Be involved in necessary PEP and PEPs for the LAC and previously LAC
- 14.2 Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when looking at interventions?

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person is aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Headteacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

It is appropriate for a member of the support staff team to have knowledge that the young person is in care only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person. However, it is important that these staff are aware of the effect of attachment and trauma on the behaviour and learning of these children.

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 extent of this sharing should be determined by the Headteacher or the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility. This will provide information to inform the Personal Education Plan (ePEP). It includes anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care for them. An appropriate school induction must take place.

Involve the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation

should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker, and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important that the young person is supported to complete the Pupil Voice section of the Personal Education Plan by the Designated Teacher to inform the ePEP and Care Plan review meetings.

It is important to establish the child's view of their changed circumstances and what they want others to know. It is also important to ensure that a Social Worker/teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they may be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

EXPECTATION OF STAFF

At St Nicholas Priory School, all staff deal with children in a positive, sensitive and timely manner; where looked after children are concerned, this will be especially the case. Particular importance will be placed upon confidentiality.

Staff will be made aware of the pupil's personal education plan, and of any issues that have whole school implications. The designated teacher and the key worker – will have overall responsibility for the monitoring of looked after children; the SENDCO will be involved in providing additional support as required and adhere to the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Policy statement is drawn up in accordance with Norfolk County Virtual School Council Guidelines and the DFE statutory guidance published February 2018.

MONITORING

The governing body and the headteacher and/or the appointed person will review the policy.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body annually. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is operated within the framework or other relevant policies and procedures.

Adopted by governors on date: 11th July 2016

Reviewed and updated in March 2018 and September 2019.

Signed ***Date: 1st October 2019***

Name

(On behalf of the Governing Body)

Next review date: September 2020

Appendix 1 – Further Information

Looked After Children Policy

This table gives a brief summary of the main roles mentioned in this guidance:

Role	Brief Description
Director of Children’s Services (DCS)	DCSs have professional responsibility for leadership and strategic effectiveness of local authority children’s services.
Lead Member of Children’s Services (LMCS)	The LMCA is a member of Council Executive and has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children’s services.
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)	Every Looked after child must have a named IRO who is appointed to participate in case reviews and monitor the local authority’s performance in relation to a child’s case.
School admission authorities	Local authorities are the admission authority for community schools and voluntary controlled schools.
Special Educational Needs Department and SENCOs	The SEND Coordinator (SENDCO), in collaboration with the Headteacher and Governing body, plays an important role in determining the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school in order to raise the achievement of children with SEN.
Designated teachers	All maintained schools, academies and Free Schools are required to appoint a designated teacher to champion the educational attainment of Looked after children and act as a source of information and advice about their needs.

Useful resources and external organisations

- The Who Cares? Trust: www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk
- The National Children’s Bureau: www.ncb.org.uk
- Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire: www.sdqinfo.com
- The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children (Ofsted report 2012): www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/impact-of-virtual-schools-education-progress-of-looked-after-children
- Education Matters in Care: A report by the independent cross-party inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children in England: [www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/education Matters in Care September 2012.pdf](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/education%20Matters%20in%20Care%20September%202012.pdf)
- Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework) and review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection
- Looked after children, good practice in schools (Ofsted report 2008): www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/looked-after-children-good-practice-schools

Other relevant departmental advice and statutory guidance

- PEPning, placement and case review guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-care-planning-placement-and-case-review
- Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers: www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-transition-to-adulthood-for-care-leavers
- The IRO Handbook: www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-reviewing-officers-handbook
- SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0 – 25: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25
- Directors of children’s services roles and responsibilities: www.gov.uk/government/publications/directors-of-childrens-services-roles-and-responsibilities
- School Admissions Code: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code
- School exclusions guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusions-code
- Pupil Premium conditions of grant: www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-grant-2014-to-2015-conditions-of-grant
- Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools: www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-attainment-of-looked-after-children-in-secondary-schools-guidance-for-schools
- Mental health and behaviour in schools, departmental advice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2
- Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-for-schools

Other departmental resources

- Outcomes for looked after children by local authorities: www.gov.uk/government/publications/outcomes-for-children-looked-after-by-las-in-england