



Looked After Children Policy

St George Catholic VA College aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of all pupils in its care especially those that are looked after.

Looked after children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example they may experience a high level of disruption and change in school placements, a lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities and inconsistent or no attention paid to homework. This may result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population and may lead to underachievement in further and higher education.

The Governing Body is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (below), whatever their background or their circumstances:

1. Stay Safe
2. Be Healthy
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution
5. Achieve economic well being

Aims of the policy

- Ensure that College policies and procedures are followed for looked after children
- Ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- Ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all College activities.
- Ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress, attendance and attainment.
- Ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Who are Looked After Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a Local Authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20).
- Children who are the subjects of a Care Order (Section 31) or Interim Care Order (Section 38).
- Children who are the subjects of Emergency Orders for their protection (Sections 44

- and 46).
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the Local Authority or subject to a Criminal Justice Supervision Order with a residence requirement (Section 21).

The term “in care” refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster parents, in a Children’s Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are “accommodated” by the Local Authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s Home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to “Children Looked After” – LAC. They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

1. Admissions

The Governing Body endorses Local Authority policy. The Governing Body is the Admission’s Authority for the College and believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. This is reflected in the College Admissions Policy. LAC may enter College mid-term and it is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle.

2. Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the College makes appropriate provision for LAC pupils.

3. Allocation of Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the College allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

4. Monitoring the Progress of LAC

The social worker responsible should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 10 days of the pupil joining the College or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the College assesses each LAC’s attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The College will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals, narrowing the gap between their attainment compared to their peers. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the social worker. The young person’s views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

5. Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know who all the LAC are in College and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social workers. The Designated Teacher will also know about any LAC from other authorities. It is important that the College flags LAC status appropriately in the College’s information systems so that data is readily available as required.

6. Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC.

7. Partnership with Parents/Carers and Social Workers

At College we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and social workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

8. Links with External Agencies/Organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- LAC Teams
- Educational Psychologists
- Medical Officers
- School Nurse
- CAMHS (Children and Adolescence Mental Health Service)
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social Care Worker
- Diocesan Youth Workers/Chaplaincy Team

9. LAC Policy Review and Evaluation

We consider the LAC policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

The college designated teacher for looked after children is **Marie Cordeiro**.
The Governor with responsibility for looked after children is Mandy Stanswood.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for LAC within the College
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the College Community.
- Know who all the LAC are in College, including those in the care of other authorities and ensure the availability of all relevant details from College record-keeping systems as required.
- Attend relevant training about LAC.
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate.

- Ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering College, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle.
- Ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 10 days of joining the College and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan.
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at six monthly intervals.
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil.
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to LAC.
- Ensure that care and College liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other College events.
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities for LAC.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational establishment.
- Contribute information to LAC reviews when required.
- Report to the Governing Body on LAC in the College and inform of relevant policy and practice development.
- Arrange a mentor to whom the young person can talk, particularly when the pupil is new to the College.
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed.
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium is used to support the targets in the PEP.
- Ensure that attainment and targets are tracked and forwarded to the LA.

Prepare reports for Governors meetings to include:

- The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a PEP
- Their attendance compared to other pupils.
- Their attainment compared to other pupils.
- The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- The destinations of pupils who leave the College.
- Attend Governing Body meetings as appropriate – such as the disciplinary and exclusion of LAC.

This policy will be reviewed every year and amended as necessary.

Date of next review: November 2017

The Policy Working Group agreed this policy on 30 November 2016.