

Policy Title:	Child Looked After Policy (formerly Looked After Children)
Responsibility:	Headteacher
Review Body:	Board of Trustees
Date:	March 2022
Review:	March 2024

Statement of Intent

St George's (the Academy) is committed to improving the educational achievement and subsequent life chances for children looked after and previously looked after. The Academy endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, the Academy aims to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Provide pupils with high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to enable the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

Children Act 1989

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

Children and Families Act 2014

Children and Social Work Act 2017

DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'

DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'

DfE (2021) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'

DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' which from time to time is in force.

DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' which from time to time is in force.

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. 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”.

Children looked after are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children’s residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

Children previously looked after are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Following the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, schools and designated teachers also have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. Consequently, for the purposes of this policy the term ‘children looked after’ includes children previously looked after as defined by the Children and Social Work Act 2017

Objective

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

In support of this objective the Academy will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each child who is looked after has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place;
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenges negative stereotypes;
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary;
- 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 cascade this training to school staff as appropriate;
- Seek to review the Academy’s policies regularly in the light of the local authority’s Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for

Education/ Department of Health guidance on The Education Of Children And Young People In Public Care (Archived);

- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies and that it complies with data protection legislation;
- Ensure that there is regular dialogue between the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the Academy and the designated teacher to safeguard children looked after.
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated at the Academy to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.
- Endeavour to use the allocated resources to support looked after children.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that children looked after are not disadvantaged as a result of any loss in teaching and learning time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policies relating to Children Looked After

This policy is one of a series in the Trust's integrated safeguarding and inclusion portfolio and should be read alongside both central Trust and individual academy policies. These include:

The Trust's policies on:

- Child Looked After
- Data Protection
- Equality
- Health and Safety
- Positive Handling
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Safer Recruitment
- Special Educational Needs and Disability

Academies' individual policies on:

- Accessibility Plan
- Admission Arrangements
- Administration of medicine and first aid
- Attendance
- Appropriate physical contact including restraint
- Behaviour including anti-bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- E-safety and acceptable use
- Health and safety procedures
- Missing children
- Personal and intimate care
- Photography of children and young people
- Pupil Premium
- Remote Learning
- SEND

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher – In addition to the responsibilities delegated by Trustees as detailed in the Trust's Child Looked After Policy, Headteacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher;

- ensure that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training, has sufficient time to undertake the role and cascades the training to appropriate staff;
- oversee the implementation of this policy;
- be responsible for all systems to support children looked after in order to achieve the objective especially during any loss of learning associated with the COVID_19 pandemic;
- ensure that the relevant staff have the necessary information regarding the legal status, parental responsibility, care arrangements and contact details regarding the looked after child.
- ensuring staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to keep the looked after children and previously looked after children safe.
- work with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to ensure that the pupil premium funding allocated in respect of the looked after and previously looked after children is used to promote their needs.
- Ensuring that staff at the Academy are aware of the importance of supporting children looked after and previously looked after and there are strategies in place to promote include and challenge negative stereotypes.
- be aware of the following:
 - the number of pupils classified as children looked after in the Academy;
 - an analysis of attainment and progress measures of pupils classified as children looked after as a discrete group, compared to other pupils and nationally;
 - the attendance of pupils classified as children looked after, compared to other pupils;
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils;
 - the destination of pupils classified as children looked after when leaving the school;
 - the number of complaints;

The Headteacher is accountable to the Trust for the achieving the objective and as such should be satisfied that the Academy's policies and procedures ensure pupils designated as children looked after have equal access to:

- Full time educational provisions of at least 2 hours;
- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress;
- Employment excellence career guidance [delete if not relevant];
- Additional educational support;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Work experiences [delete if not relevant];
- The most effective use of Pupil Premium to raise attainment.

Designated Teacher - The Designated Teacher for children looked after at the Academy is:

Michelle Fahey

The Designated Teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding children looked after at the Academy. He/she will serve as the contact for social services and other agencies and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support children looked after within the Academy. This includes serving as an advocate for all children looked after in the Academy.

The Designated Teacher's role will include:

- To maintain a register of children in public care and to have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after and maintaining records regarding children looked after;
- To ensure that the educational achievement of each child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and where relevant, accelerated and ensuring that relationships are built with health, education and social care partners so that they understand the support of the looked after and previously looked after children;
- To ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan or ePEP with SMART targets that will promote progress and to assist in co-ordinating the education and PEP meetings;
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium during the Personal Education Planning meeting;
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the pupil and to be accountable for how it is spent with outcome evidenced;
- To work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to ensure all children looked after with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning;
- To work closely with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to ensure that looked after and previously looked after children are safe.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children looked after and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;
- To 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 Personal Educational Planning meeting;
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children in care, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to the academy staff where relevant and carer(s), that this information is kept up to date and used on a need to know basis to help the pupil overcome obstacles to learning and progress;
- To track and support the educational progress of all pupils who are looked-after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- To inform the planning and establish a system for the smooth transition of children looked after to and from the academy;
- To ensure that the educational targets within the Personal Education Plan (PEP) are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant staff are aware of them;
- To 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.
- To ensure that pupils who have been previously looked after or are care leavers continue to be supported and monitored in relation to all the areas mentioned above.

- To work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.
- To keep in contact with and support the learning of children looked after when they are not able to attend school due to a COVID-19 related issue through regular contact with the designated teacher and the delivery of blended learning.

Working 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;
- To enable the child looked after to make a contribution to their Care Plan ensuring where reasonably possible that their views are considered and implemented;
- To ensure the child looked after has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues;
- To develop in-school strategies to promote and accelerate the achievement of children looked after and close the gap between them and their peers;
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.

Liaison:

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on Child Protection Plans;
- To develop effective communication with the VSH and Children's Services staff so that the Personal Education Plan or ePEP is congruent with the pupil's Care Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings and statutory reviews;
- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's Services and to promote effective communication with all relevant parties;
- To 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.
- To maintain and respect confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- To work closely and communicate effectively with the VSH to enable the needs of looked after and previously looked after children to be met and the allocated pupil premium is effectively applied.

Training:

- To develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training events organised by Children's Services, the Virtual School or local Designated Teachers cluster groups;
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate so that they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children looked after and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements;

- To have the relevant training and ensure that the requisite staff are trained and have information on admissions, SEND, attendance, exclusions, homework GCSE options (if relevant), managing behaviour and safeguarding.
- To train academy staff so they have an awareness of the impact of attachment disorder and pre-care trauma on learning;
- To be aware of mental health issues which may affect looked after and previously looked after children and work with the VSH to support them.
- To attend other training as appropriate;
- To keep informed of any updated guidance from Ofsted, DfE or other research or policy.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of children looked after's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding children looked after and previously looked after as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for children looked after and previously looked after.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of children looked after and previously looked after.

Teachers –

- To be aware of looked after and previously looked after children and providing them with the necessary support and encouragement and raising their self-esteem.
- Being vigilant to support looked after and previously looked after children to be safe, not bullied and their needs met. Raising any concerns with the Designated Teacher and/or the DSL as appropriate.
- Preserving confidentiality and only sharing personal data information where it is necessary.
- To ensure that the progress of pupils in public care are scrutinised and that ongoing progress is being made. Any concerns should be raised with the Designated Teacher as soon as possible.

Confidentiality, Data Protection and Information Sharing

- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to support the education needs of children looked after and previously looked after are understood and met and the relevant data is held securely.
- The Headteacher and/or the Designated Teacher have responsibility for informing all teaching staff who are in contact with the child looked after of the care status.
- In the absence of the usual class teacher, the Headteacher should make sure that any supply teacher is aware that there is a child in public care in their class. [Where the absence is known in advance, the teacher writing their cover lesson should indicate this status on the Cover register with any appropriate notes – include if appropriate];

- As the academy's administrative office will be the initial contact of carers and other agencies with the academy, the academy's office staff will have knowledge of the pupil's care status;
- It is appropriate for support staff to have knowledge that the pupil is being looked after when directly involved in the teaching of the pupil;
- Other staff may need to know if there are particular concerns that require a whole-school approach;
- In each case, the Headteacher and the Designated Teacher will determine the extent of the information shared. In every case, only information that is critical to the working relationship will be passed on.
- Where data sharing has been considered necessary, the information must be accurate and reliable.
- The Headteacher and/or the Designated Teacher will determine how information is shared with carer and/ or parents and how they are provided with the opportunity to challenge or contribute to the information held.
- the Headteacher and/ or the Designated Teacher will determine the mechanisms for sharing information between the Academy, LA and other external agencies.
- All processing and sharing of personal data of the child will be undertaken in accordance with data protections principles as detailed in the Trust's data protection policy.

Pupil Education Plans (PEP)

All looked after and previously looked after children must have a PEP which is an integral part of their educational care plan. The PEP provides a record of and addresses the identified educational and developmental needs of the pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. All agencies and the pupil's carers will be involved in the PEP at all stages. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs. The VSH and the Designated Teacher will ensure that information is included on how they are benefitting from any use of pupil premium funding, its use being evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

Admission

Children who are looked after and previously looked after children are a priority for admission as detailed in the Academy's published admission criteria.

[On admission, the pupil will meet with the Designated Teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and support the pupil to feel comfortable at our school. Records will be requested from the pupil'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 pupil as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the pupil's new Personal Education Plan, and require that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, the Academy 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.) –

Is the funding ring-fenced for each child? No. Funding is not ring fenced and schools can pool Pupil Premium money for numerous children to pay for collective support to gain maximum impact from

the funding. The Pupil Premium is additional money for schools to improve the educational and personal outcomes of disadvantaged pupils including those who have been adopted from care. It is not intended that the additional funding should be used to back-fill the general school budget nor that the funding should be used to support other groups of pupils. Schools are inspected by Ofsted on their effective use of Pupil Premium funding.

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 children looked after enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Involvement with Parents and other Agencies

The Academy recognises that support from home greatly assists a pupil's educational progress and aims to involve parents, carers and those with parental responsibility in an open and positive manner. The Academy will maintain regular communication with the primary carer and will ensure that copies of reports are forwarded to the social worker in addition to the foster carer and parents as appropriate. The Academy will also coordinate their review meetings with other agencies, if it is appropriate to do so.

The Academy recognises that multi-agency working is crucial to the support and progress of children in public care. The Academy will work closely with other agencies involved in supporting the achievements and welfare of the pupil, particularly the social worker and will exchange significant information to appropriate personnel between reviews when necessary.

The Academy will work with the VSH to support pupils such as in relation to behaviour management strategies. The Designated Teacher will liaise with the VSH to determine the effective use of pupil premium to advance the pupil's educational attainment and progress.

The Designated Teacher will provide consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding children looked after who are absent without authorisation.

Training

The Designated Teacher and other school staff involved in the education of children looked after and previously looked after children will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- Academy admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment.
- Safeguarding

All training will enable staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC and PLAC safe.

Safeguarding

The Academy recognises that many children looked after and previously looked after children have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will inform all staff so they are aware of experiences of adversity such as those that can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will practise extra vigilance in observing and identifying these indicators amongst children looked after and previously looked after as soon as possible.

Where a pupil looked after or previously looked after has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The Designated Teacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to enable the welfare of the relevant pupils to be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have in line with the processes outlined in the Trust and Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the Designated Teacher if they believe a child looked after or previously looked after is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

Mental health

Children looked after and previously looked after are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The Designated Teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The Designated Teacher will work with the VSH to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on children looked after and previously looked after and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The Academy understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst children looked after and previously looked after may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the Designated Teacher will encourage all staff who maintain regular contact with children looked after and previously looked after vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

The Academy's senior mental health lead will work alongside the Designated Teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of children looked after and previously looked after. The Academy's SEMH Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that children looked after and previously looked after may face.

Exclusions

The Academy will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance regarding exclusion and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any children looked after. Where the Academy has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the Academy will

engage proactively with the social worker or carer of children looked after and previously looked after to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the Academy 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. The Academy will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the Academy's Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Pupils with SEND

Support for children looked after and previously looked after with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

The SENCO, Designated Teacher, relevant teachers and specialists will involve carers/parents when considering interventions to support pupil's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision.

The Designated Teacher and the SENCO will ensure that children looked after and previously looked after with SEND are supported in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for children looked after such as those in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

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. Thereafter the Academy's complaints policy must be followed.

[If school wish to personalise this policy by providing information specific to the school then this information can be included below:

DATA PROTECTION St George's CE Primary School [The Academy] processes personal data, some of which will be sensitive personal data, in accordance with the data protection principles embodied in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Academy complies with the requirements of the data protection legislation as detailed in the Trust Data Protection Policy. All staff are aware of the principles of data protection and will not process personal data unless necessary. The Academy safeguards the personal data it collects through the operation of the Trust's data protection policy and processes and the IT policy. In addition, the Academy has taken steps to ensure that all its contracts that process data have the GDPR compliant provisions.