

ST. DAMIAN'S RC SCIENCE COLLEGE



Looked After Children Policy

Approved by Governors:	April 2024
Date to be reviewed:	Annually

Introduction

Looked after Children's lives are characterised by disruption. Moving in and out of care means moving in and out of their family home, foster care and children's homes. Sometimes school is the only stable place in their lives.

(a) The Objectives of the Policy

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after pupils

(b) Definition of Looked After Children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he/she is in their care, or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into 4 main groups:

- Accommodated under a voluntary agreement with parents.
- Care Order or Interim Care Order
- Emergency Protection Order
- Compulsory accommodated (this includes remanded to the Local Authority)

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. The Local Authority acquires parental responsibility which it **shares** with the parents. These children may live with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives, or even 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 with:

- Foster Carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- Or even, very unusually, with parents.

Unaccompanied children under 16 years arriving in the UK as asylum seeker or refugees are accommodated under Section 20 by the Local Authority.

(c) The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children's at St. Damian's is Mrs F Brophy and Mrs Val Harrison (young carers)

(d) The role of the Designated Teacher:

e.g. Within St. Damians School

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children who are looked after and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are looked after, and promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc.
- To hold a supervisory brief for all children who are looked after, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date.
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are looked after in order to form part of the school's development plan.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with Services for Children & Young People colleagues and carers for reporting and recording absence from school and by acting to address these issues through early and positive intervention.
- To ensure the involvement of careers advice (Mrs Khyati Patel) with children who are looked after in Years 9, 10 and 11.

Work with individual children in care.

- To work with individual children, possible through a carer, to arrive at a statement about their circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils.
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan.
- To ensure that each pupil has a Personal Educational Plan.

Liaison

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register. (Mrs Faith Brophy – Assistant Headteacher).
- To co-ordinate education and children in care review meetings, so that any Personal Education Plans can form part of the child's Care Plan.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meeting for children who are looked after.
- To be named contact for Services for Children & Young People colleagues
- To report on the progress of all children who are looked after to Governors.

Training

- To develop knowledge of Services for Children & Young People procedures by attending training events.

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.

St Damians are fully committed to Inclusion and Every Child Matters.

- To be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution to society
- Achieve economic wellbeing.

(e) Role of Named Governor The Governor for Looked After Children is Mrs Kathryn Connor

The LAC governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of children who are looked after in the school.
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils.
- The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions.
- Pupil destinations.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that children who are looked after have access to:

- The National Curriculum
- Public Examinations
- Careers Guidance
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Additional Educational Support

(f) Responsibility for Children in Care in School

e.g. It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware the 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 person named as the coordinator for looked after children within the school.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant to have knowledge that the young person is a looked after child only when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

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 of the school's co-ordinator for children in care.

(g) Admission Arrangements

e.g. On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school. A meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker as appropriate to complete base line information to form part of the pupil's Personal Education Plan and clarify contact arrangements. A home school agreement will be drawn up with the primary carer. An appropriate school induction will take place.

(h) Involving 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 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 named teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they be asked about home, e.g. by other pupils in the playground.

(i) Communication with Other Agencies.

The social worker and the school co-ordinator for looked after children should meet when the young person becomes looked after, or when they join the school. This will enable information concerning the child's progress and circumstances to be shared. The monitoring form should help ensure that all information relevant to school is exchanged.

St. Damians will ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. end of year) should be forwarded to the young person's social worker, the ERT link worker in addition to, for example, the foster carer or residential social worker.

Schools, Services for Children & Young People should endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g. to have an Annual Review of a Statement combined with Statutory Care Review.

Services for Children & Young People, and schools, will need to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g. if school is considering an exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

St. Damians has trained counsellors.

(j) Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures.
St. Damians General Policy & Practice will be followed.

Each looked after child will have a Personal Education Plan. This will identify specific areas of concern and achievable targets.

Areas for consideration will include :

- Attendance
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)
- Behaviour
- Homework
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities
- Relationship to Care Plan
- Special Needs (if any)
- Development Needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Long term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations)

Liaison will be undertaken with Education Welfare/Education Psychology/Social Workers, etc in the assessment and review processes as appropriate.

The named Governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the key indicators.