

# St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

## Looked After Children Policy



Policy	Looked After Children Policy
Date	May 2024
Date of review	September 2025
Signed Chair of Governors	<i>Eugene McCarthy</i>
Signed Headteacher	<i>Clare Scott</i>

**Headteacher/Principal/Senior Manager:**

responsible for implementing policies & procedures, allocating resources to the safeguarding team & addressing staff safeguarding concerns.

**Mrs Clare Scott**

**Tel: 0208 270 6524**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

a member of the leadership team with appropriate authority, responsible for dealing with safeguarding issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with the local authority, and working with other agencies.

**Mrs Fiona Sapiano**

**Designated Safeguarding Deputy:**

a member of the teaching, support or pastoral staff, in a post which requires assessment of children and with sufficient status & authority to effectively deputise for the DSL role above. This cannot be an administrative or finance worker.

**Mrs Clare Scott**

**Miss Stephanie Doe**

**Designated Teacher for LAC:**

a member of the Senior Leadership team who is responsible for the educational achievement of any look-after children to help track and promote achievements.

**Mrs Fiona Sapiano**

**Special Educational Needs Coordinator**

**(SENCo):** a staff member who provides advice, liaison & support for school staff and other agencies working with pupils with special education needs and their parents or carers.

**Mrs Fiona Sapiano**

**(Local Authority Designated Lead (LADO))**

**Mr M Cullern**

**The Safeguarding Children Team also links in with the:**

**Safeguarding/Child Protection Governor:**

ensures there are appropriate safeguarding children policies and procedures in place, monitors whether they are followed and, together with the rest of the governing body, remedies deficiencies and weaknesses that are identified.

**Mrs Lynn Barnes**

**Chair of Governors:** takes the lead in dealing with allegations of abuse made against the Headteacher/Principal/Senior Manager (and other members of staff when the Headteacher is not available), in liaison with the Local Authority; and on safe recruitment practices with the Headteacher/Principal/Senior Manager.

**Mr Eugene McCarthy**

## **Purpose**

The school aims to ensure that:

Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding and Looked After Children.

Staff are trained to recognise and report all safeguarding issues.

Appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner when a child becomes a Looked after child.

## **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 (2022) 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2022) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Behaviour
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints

- Health and safety
- Intimate care
- Attendance
- Online safety
- Operation Encompass
- Equality
- Relationships, Sex and Health education
- Personal, social and Health education
- First aid
- Curriculum
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Privacy notices
- Whistle blowing
- Anti-bullying
- Acceptable use

## **Definitions**

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:**

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

### **Terminology:**

**Looked After Child** refers to a child who is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council’s children’s services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours. The term ‘Children in Care’ is also used to define the same group of young people.

**Previously Looked After Child** refers to a child who is no longer looked after because he/she is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

**Virtual School:** the Virtual School does not exist in terms of a building and children and young people do not attend. It is a service provided by dedicated professionals within the Children, Schools and Families Directorate whose work is to promote and co-ordinate educational support for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

**Virtual School Head (VSH):** the headteacher of the virtual school. They work strategically across the authority and with schools to monitor and support the educational achievement of looked after children as if they were in a single school. Each local authority has its own virtual school.

**A Designated Teacher** is a member of the Senior Leadership Team who is responsible for the educational achievement of any looked-after and previously looked-after children in their school.

**A Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is a record of the child's education and training. It describes what needs to happen for a looked-after child to help them fulfil their potential. The government has made PEPs a statutory requirement for looked-after children to help track and promote their achievements.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child** means everyone under the age of 18.

### **Looked After Children**

When a child or young person is taken into care by a local authority under a court order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority – who become their 'Corporate Parent'. Young people can also be in care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a status known as 'accommodated') where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, but this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but some may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). It is important the school attended by the child is aware of their care status, as many children and families are supported by social care without the use of care orders. Foster carers will very rarely hold parental responsibility – this is assumed by the social worker. Children placed for adoption remain looked after by the local authority until the final order.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is required for every child in care and forms part of their overall Care Plan. The Care Plan should be in place within six weeks of entering care and thereafter reviewed at least every term.

The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard looked-after children, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to 'achieve to reach their full potential'.

The role of a Virtual Headteacher for looked-after children is now statutory for every local authority.

Virtual Headteachers will scrutinise, challenge and support schools with their teaching and learning for all children in care and assist each other in this task where children cross physical borders to live and attend education provision

### **Previously Looked-After Children**

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after because he/she is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

Virtual Headteachers have a statutory duty to provide advice and support to schools in relation to their support role for previously looked-after children; and to help promote their educational achievement.

### **Role and responsibilities of the headmaster and senior leadership team:**

- The school will promote a culture in which looked-after children and previously looked-after children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out.
- The school will appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children and a Designated Teacher for Previously Looked-After Children.
- The school will ensure the Designated Teachers are able to fulfil their roles and responsibilities (This will include the provision of time to undertake the role; supporting training needs and providing opportunities for the cascade of training to all staff and governors in the school).

- The school will ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by looked-after children and previously looked-after children; and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them (a young person's ability to engage in learning can be undermined by feelings of loss, rejection, confusion, insecurity and low self-esteem – being or becoming 'in care' has a major impact on children's lives).
- The school will recognise the particular circumstances of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and provide for these in all other school policies.
- The school will ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for, individual children.
- The school is committed to working with local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- The school is committed to promoting a school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters; and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

**Role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked-after children:**

- To have high expectations of looked-after children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all looked-after children in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- To support the well-being and mental health of looked-after children, ensuring all needs are identified and met.
- To act as an advocate for looked-after children.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of looked-after children.



- To promote the involvement of these children in the co-curricular programme.
- To be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority children's services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners.
- To work with the Virtual School Headteacher to agree how funding (Pupil Premium +) can be most effectively used to improve looked-after children's attainment.
- To ensure every looked-after child has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) that includes appropriate educational targets and encourages the 'voice of the child' to be heard<sup>2</sup>
- To oversee the implementation as well as termly reviews of Personal Education Plans to ensure they are meeting the needs of the looked-after child.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- To work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- To provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate.
- To present, when appropriate, an annual report to the board of trustees.
- To organise training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

**Roles and responsibilities of all staff:**

- To be aware of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and, where appropriate, be familiar with their educational needs.
- To have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's involvement in learning, educational progress and personal development.
- To ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children are supported sensitively.
- To respond positively to a request to attend training specifically aimed at supporting looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- To respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.

- To promote the self-esteem of looked-after children and previously looked-after children; maintain confidentiality and ensure that no looked-after or previously looked after child is stigmatised in any way.

### **Equality statement**

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

- We give special consideration to children who:
  - Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see section 9)
  - Are young carers
  - May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
  - Have English as an additional language
  - Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence.
  - Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.
  - Are asylum seekers.
  - Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
  - Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 11)

### **All staff**

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the behaviour policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education

The early help process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL/DDSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment

The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play.

What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals

The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation.

Section 15 and appendix 4 of this policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

### **The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)**

The DSL is a member of the school leadership team. Our DSL is Fiona Sapiano, Senior Leader, The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

When the DSL is absent, the deputies – Mrs. Clare Scott, Miss Stephanie Doe, Miss Rebecca Anthony or Mr. Calum Howard- will act as cover.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources, and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of children.

- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly

The DSL will also keep the headteacher informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.

### **The governing board**

The governing board will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) link governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board.

Our link Governor is Mrs Lynn Barnes.

The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate (see appendix 3).

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Section 15 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

### **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly.

- Acting as the ‘case manager’ in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person.

### **Confidentiality**

The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead Person (DSL) for Child Protection:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share ‘special category personal data’, the DPA 2018 contains ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child’s best interests.

The government’s [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 ‘golden rules’ for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy)

Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 14, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

### **Record-keeping**

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

- Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available.
- Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.
- Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period after they have left the school.
- If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main pupil file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.
- Records are held electronically using the CPOMS system.
- A bound book is kept as a physical record of what is added to the system.
- All paper records are kept in a locked drawer in the Headteacher's office.
- When a pupil leaves the school all records are securely transferred.
- We share information with other agencies and when this is appropriate, in line with the local safeguarding procedures.

## **Training**

### **All staff**

- All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners.
- All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

- Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.
- Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.
- Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

### **The DSL and deputies**

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

### **Governors**

All governors receive training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.

As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

### **Recruitment – interview panels**

At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

### **Staff who have contact with pupils and families**

All staff who have contact with children and families will have supervisions which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.