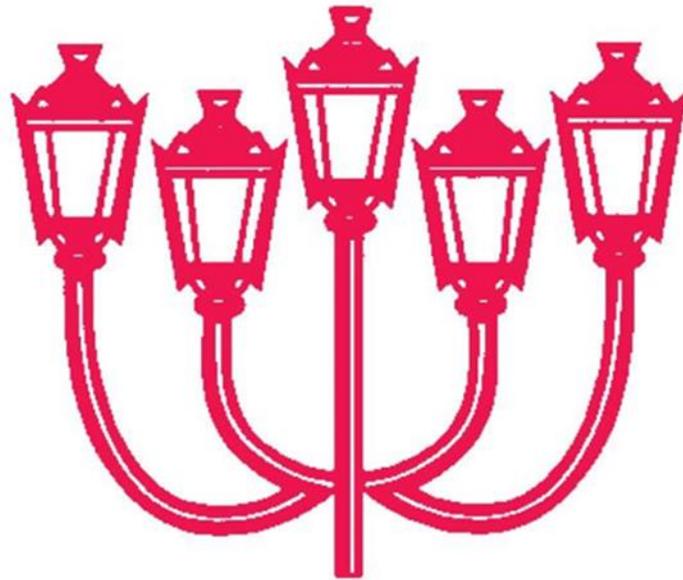


# Thornaby Church of England Primary School



## Looked After Children Policy (LAC) 2022 - 2023

**Mission Statement:**

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at Parish and Diocesan level.

The School aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

Walking and learning with faith in the footsteps of Jesus

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## Rationale

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of looked after children, and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of looked after children and schools play a pivotal role in this.

## Definition

Looked after children 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 or respite care.

Furthermore, 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”.

Previously looked after children 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).

LAC reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However, Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for LAC until they are 16 years old.

## Aims

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.

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- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extracurricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- 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 all school policies regularly in the light of the LEA's Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

Our school's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Looked After Children is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising aspiration
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Promoting health and well-being
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

In pursuit of this policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Looked After Children.
- Work closely with the Virtual School and Social Care in the best interests of LAC and in completion of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

## Roles and Responsibilities Of The Designated Teacher

The role became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Persons' Act 2008 (the 2008 Act). The Designated Teacher must be a qualified teacher or a member of staff. Ideally, s/he should be a senior member of staff who has enough status and experience to advise and provide training to school

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staff on issues relating to LAC. They need to be able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning of these children.

The designated teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all looked after children in the school.

The designated teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked after children of the school by:

- maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- acting as an advocate for looked after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances

The designated teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children. S/he will:

- have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after
- maintain records regarding all looked after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer monitor the educational progress of all looked after children and intervene, in cooperation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern

The designated teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's PEP
- playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked after children
- helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP).

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The designated teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- by meeting with the looked after child to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role
- by ensuring each child has a named member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues (this maybe the class teacher in a primary school)
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- by requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a looked after child requires additional academic or behavioural support
- by working closely with the SENCO to ensure all looked after children with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- by encouraging all children to continue on to further or higher education
- by ensuring all looked after children are made to feel a part of the school environment

The **Designated Teacher** at Thornaby Church of England Primary School is **Mrs E Hughes-Narborough**.

The **Deputy Designated Teachers** at Thornaby Church of England Primary School is **Richard Perks, Jodie Wallis, Kerry Cooper, Jenny Singh and Joanne Stockdale**

## Role and Responsibility of All Staff

- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- be familiar with the and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate.
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way.
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting.
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children.
- positively promote the self-esteem of Looked After Children.

## The role and responsibility of the governing body

Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

- Ensure that the DT is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.

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- In partnership with the headteacher, ensure that, through their training and development, the DT has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand the respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of LAC.
- Governing bodies and the SLT should make sure that the DT role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting LAC to achieve.
- The governing body, in partnership with the head teacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the DT.

## Personal Education Plans

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses
- interests, both in and out of school
- developmental and educational and pastoral needs
- future plans, and how these can be supported
- issues arising for the child
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

## Confidentiality

- information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a "need to know basis"
- the Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

## Admission/Induction Arrangements

Looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LEA's published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child'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 child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

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In the first PEP meeting, we 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/schoolbook to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

## 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.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue that remains unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head teacher's response

This policy links with a number of other school policies/procedures and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Equality Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Statement
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

