



**St John Plessington  
Catholic College**

# Designated Teacher Policy

**(Looked After and Previously Looked After Children)  
2022 - 23**

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## 1. Aims of the Policy

In the HFCMAT, we believe in the transformational power of education. At SJP, we are steadfast in our support of and recognise the individual needs of all care experienced children enabling them to learn, aspire, thrive and achieve their full potential.

This will be achieved by:

- Placing the highest priority on the CLA's and PLAC's education
- Promoting regular attendance
- Having high expectations and aspirations
- Promoting agency, access and inclusion in all areas of school life
- Promoting stability and continuity
- Swift early intervention when concerns arise
- Valuing the voice of the child
- Making it a priority to know the child well and to build strong relationships
- Promoting social, emotional and mental health and well-being
- Working in partnership with parents, carers, guardians, social workers and other key professionals

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher (DT) who has the responsibility of promoting the educational achievement of all Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After (PLAC) that are educated at St John Plessington Catholic College. The CLA Learning Coach (CLA LC) will also support this role and responsibilities.
- The DT will promote the educational achievement of all CLA and PLAC pupils through guiding and supporting staff members in promoting their educational achievement.
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the DT, of how to contact them and what they are responsible for.
- The governing body will, through the DT, hold the College to account on how it supports those students who are CLA and PLAC, including how the PP+ funding is used and the level of progress made.

### 1.1 Guiding Principles

- The voice of the child is essential to our practice. We believe that the voices of all children and young people should be heard when decisions are made that affect them.
- All students will receive high quality education which is broad, inspiring and aspirational, resulting in the best possible outcomes, thus closing the educational gap between those children who are and those who are not care experienced
- Every care-experienced child will have a positive educational experience which promotes social and emotional learning and wellbeing alongside academic success to ensure fullness of life
- We develop individual excellence of all CLA and PLAC, encouraging all to embrace opportunities
- The College will meet the needs of care-experienced children through swift intervention where needed, effective liaison and collaboration with key workers, including the Virtual Schools Head.

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children' guidance, February 2018. It also takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### **3. Definitions**

#### **3.1 Children who are Looked After (CLA)**

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked-after by a local authority if s/he is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20);
- children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38);
- and children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child (section 44).
- 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 carers, 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 1989. These children may live in foster care, in a residential children's home or in a residential school or other setting . All these groups are said to be children who are looked after (CLA).

#### **3.2 Children who are Previously Looked After (PLAC)**

Under 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children' 2018 statutory guidance, PLAC are registered students that fall into either of these categories:

The child was looked after by a Local Authority but ceased to be CLA status as a result of any of the following:

1. A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them;
2. A special guardianship order (SGO);
3. An adoption order.

They appear to the governing board to have:

1. Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
2. ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

### 3.3 Designated Teacher

Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010, various duties were placed on the governing body of a maintained school in England and the proprietor of an academy in England. As a result of the amendments the College ensures that it will:

- Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship order or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- Ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training; and ensure they and the designated teacher understands and acknowledges all guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

SJP acknowledges that the Secretary of State has the power to make regulations to prescribe the necessary qualifications or experience of the designated member of staff for previously looked after children.

#### **The importance of a Designated Teacher in supporting CLA and PLAC students**

We recognise that, looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.

We acknowledge that nationally, there is educational underachievement of CLA and PLAC when compared with their peers, and we are dedicated to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance from the following:

- 'The roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children'
- 'The Children and Young Persons Act 2008",
- 'Designated Teacher (looked after children etc.) (England) Regulation 2009'.
- The guidance of 'Improving the attainment of looked after young people in Secondary Schools'.
- The Children Act 1989, which places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential".

We understand that for many children in care, school life can be challenging. They may find it harder to trust adults; their educational experience may have been disrupted; and their capacity to build and maintain friendships may be impaired. We fully recognise that a Designated Teacher can never work in isolation to support CLA and PLAC students, we understand that a collaborative approach is essential and at SJP, we will be guided by the 'Improving the attainment of looked after students in secondary schools' guidance.

All CLA and PLAC will have a wide range of support mechanisms that will assist in promoting their educational achievement. Working in conjunction with the “Improving the attainment of looked after students in secondary schools” guidance to ensure that all CLA and PLAC students make good progress and achieve aspirational levels of attainment, we follow these effective practice principles outlined in the guidance:

1. Doing the things they do for all young people but more so
2. Balancing high levels of support with real challenge
3. Skilfully linking each young person to a key person they relate well to
4. Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships
5. Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies
6. Making things happen and seeing things through
7. Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility
8. Actively extending the horizons of each young person
9. Planning for future transitions

### **3.4 Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

PEPs are a part of a CLA care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential. The PEP is a vital document because it provides a ‘collective memory’ about the child’s education. The quality assurance of the PEP is fundamental to ensure that the specific needs and barriers to learning are identified and that progress is reviewed on a regular basis. The Pep is an integral part of a looked-after child’s wider care plan, it forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

### **3.5 Virtual School Head (VSH)**

Since 2014, all local authorities were required to appoint an officer to discharge the duty placed on every local authority under the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of the children it looks after as if they were in a single school. The VSH role is about raising attainment and ensuring progression of all looked-after children from that authority. The VSH works 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. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 extends the role of the VSH to include providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of PLAC.

## **4. The Identity of the Designated Teacher**

The DT for St John Plessington is Ms J Gascoigne (Assistant Headteacher). You can contact Ms Gascoigne by email: [schooloffice@stjohnplessington.com](mailto:schooloffice@stjohnplessington.com)

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 The Head Teacher and The College Governing Body**

The Head Teacher and the College's governing body firmly believe in the transformational power of education and believe that a child's start in life need not determine their future. The Head Teacher and the College's governing body are committed to providing opportunities that will enable all to experience fullness of life and enhance educational life chances for all care-experienced children. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for children in care has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority and sufficient time and experience to fulfill this statutory role.

A named governor will be nominated to link with the Designated Teacher and all governors will be fully aware of the statutory guidance for care-experienced children. The Head Teacher and nominated governor will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and PLAC students make strong academic progress and that the whole school staff have relevant skills, knowledge and understanding to support the CLA and PLAC cohort.

Regular communication between the Head Teacher and governing body and the Designated Teacher should include:

- The number of CLA and PLAC students on roll
- Compliance and quality assurance of individual children's Personal Education Plan (for Children in Care)
- The use and impact of the Pupil Premium Plus grant in raising educational outcomes
- Attendance and exclusion data (in comparison to children who are not looked after or previously looked after)
- Progress and attainment data (in comparison to children who are not looked after or previously looked after)
- Destinations for CLA and PLAC students that leave St John Plessington Catholic College

### **5.2 The Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher role at St John Plessington is based on the responsibilities listed in the Department for Education 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children' Statutory Guidance, 2018. Ms Gascoigne will have lead responsibility yet St John Plessington can decide how other relevant staff may be delegated appropriate tasks. Other stakeholders will yearly undertake training with the Wirral Virtual School Head and their team, LACES. The aim of this training is to ensure that Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion is thorough, consistent and compliant.

Our Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of

looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

## **Role of the Designated Teacher**

### **5.3 Leadership Responsibilities**

The DT and CLA LC will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
  - Proactively building strong links with the Wirral and other local authority VSHs to access training and keep up to date with research and good practice.
  - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritized
  - Taking lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
    - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
    - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development, implementation and quality assurance of looked after children's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

### **5.2 Supporting Children who are Looked After**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Make sure the CLA's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with teaching staff to assess each child's specific educational needs
- Ensure that all PEPs are quality assured to meet the needs of the CLA.
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of SMART target-setting in PEPs

- Monitor and track how the CLA's attainment progresses under their PEPs
- Be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward if the CLA is not meeting expected progress / targets
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for students
- Ensure the identified actions of PEP targets are put in place
- Ensure that each PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of the CLA care plan meeting. This review will include that the PEP is up to date and contains any new information or interventions since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision has been delivered.
- Ensure the voice of the child is listened to and recorded on the PEP
- PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced.
- Ensure the updated PEP is passed onto the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan.
- If necessary, transfer a CLA's PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the Local Authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version.
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in the PEP

### **5.3 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure the needs of CLA and PLAC students are understood by all staff members in our College community and are reflected in how the College uses the pupil premium plus funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of PLAC students about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Ensure teachers have an awareness and understanding of the needs of CLA and PLAC students in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and next steps future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed

- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked after children

#### **5.4 St John Plessington Whole Staff Responsibilities**

Our staff will ensure their part in embedding a 'care-experienced children friendly culture' which is attachment-aware and trauma-informed. This may include attending training, referring to the Designated Teacher for advice and sharing accurate information and data with the Designated Teacher.

All staff will be aware of students that are CLA and PLAC in their classes.

#### **5.5 Relationships beyond the school**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:
  - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
  - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action
  - Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child's education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption
  - Making sure that, if a looked-after child moves school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition

process

- Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians. Make sure that for each looked-after child:
  - There's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
  - School policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
  - Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips
  
- Where a CLA or PLAC student is at risk of exclusion, the Designated Teacher must:
  - Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
  - Work with the VSH and child's carers, considering what additional assessment and support needs to be in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour.
  - Where a PLAC is at risk of exclusion, they must talk to the child's parents or carers before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

## 5.6 The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have details of the student's social worker and the name of the Virtual Head. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with the Designated Teacher to ensure that the young person's primary needs and safety, as well as supporting their education and development are met by working closely with the social worker and parents where appropriate.

## 6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Ms Gascoigne, DT, Mr McLoughlin, DHT and DSL, Ms Sharratt, HT and the governing body. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

<b>Staff Member with Responsibility:</b>	Head Teacher
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Ms M Sharratt
<b>Approved by:</b>	Governors

<b>Reviewed Date:</b>	September 2022
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	September 2023