

DRAFT Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy



ST CLARE
Catholic Multi Academy Trust



“Let all that you do be done with love”

Date adopted: December 2025

Review date: By 31.12.2026

ST CLARE CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Policy

Applies to: All pupils, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Policy owner: Headteacher (headteacher@st-tc.co.uk)

Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC: Lauren McKay (senco@st-tc.co.uk)

Governing body link: Gillian Akers (g.akers@st-tc.co.uk)

1. Policy Statement

At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, our mission statement — **“Let all that you do be done with love”** (1 Corinthians 16:14) — underpins our commitment to children who are looked after and previously looked after.

We recognise every child as made in the image and likeness of God, deserving of dignity, care, stability and hope. Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) may have experienced loss, trauma, separation and disrupted attachments, and therefore have a particular need for love, compassion, consistency and understanding within the school community.

This policy reflects our Catholic ethos by: - Placing the dignity of the child at the centre of all decisions - Acting with love, compassion and justice in our support for vulnerable pupils - Holding high aspirations while recognising individual need - Working in partnership with families, carers and professionals in a spirit of service

This policy sets out how the school meets its statutory duties and reflects guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), including the responsibilities of the Designated Teacher, the SEND Code of Practice, and safeguarding legislation.

2. Statutory and Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance and is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching (CST), which calls us to uphold the dignity and wellbeing of the most vulnerable:

Catholic Social Teaching Links

- **Dignity of the Human Person** – Every child is made in the image of God and worthy of love, respect and care.
- **Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable** – We give particular attention and support to children who are looked after or previously looked after.

- **Solidarity** – We work in partnership with families, carers, the Sheffield Virtual School and other professionals for the good of the child.
- **Subsidiarity** – Decisions are made in the best interests of the child, with their voice listened to and respected.
- **The Common Good** – Inclusive practice ensures all children can belong, flourish and contribute within the school community.

This policy is also informed by the following statutory guidance: - Children Act 1989 - Children and Families Act 2014 - SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015) - Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC – DfE (2018) - School Admissions Code - Keeping Children Safe in Education - Working Together to Safeguard Children.

3. Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC)

A child who is looked after by a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. This includes children: - In foster care - In residential children's homes - In other residential or secure setting.

A child is considered looked after if they have been in care for **more than 24 hours**.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

A child who was previously looked after by a local authority but is no longer looked after because they: - Have been adopted (including adoption from state care outside England and Wales) - Are subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) - Are subject to a Child Arrangements Order (CAO)

PLAC may continue to experience the impact of early trauma and attachment disruption and may require ongoing support.

4. Aims

In line with our Catholic mission to “*let all that you do be done with love*”, the school aims to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing and loving environment where LAC and PLAC feel known, valued and protected
- Promote high expectations and hope-filled aspirations for academic progress, attendance and wider achievement
- Support children to heal, grow and flourish through stable relationships and compassionate care
- Remove barriers to learning, inclusion and belonging

- Work in partnership with parents, carers, Sheffield Virtual School and external professionals in a spirit of service and collaboration

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that: - Statutory duties towards LAC and PLAC are met - A Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC is appointed - Policies reflect the needs of LAC and PLAC - Progress, attendance and exclusion data for LAC and PLAC are monitored - Pupil Premium Plus funding is used effectively.

A named governor will act as the LAC/PLAC link governor.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that: - A suitably qualified Designated Teacher is in post at all times - The Designated Teacher has sufficient time, training and authority - Whole-school practice is trauma-informed and inclusive - Exclusion of LAC and PLAC is avoided wherever possible - Staff understand safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable pupils.

Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC

The Designated Teacher: - Is a qualified teacher with sufficient seniority to influence whole-school practice - Champions the educational achievement and wellbeing of LAC and PLAC (up to age 18) - Acts as the key point of contact with the Virtual School, social workers, carers and parents - Ensures Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for LAC are high-quality, timely and outcome-focused - Shares relevant PEP targets with staff on a need-to-know basis - Monitors progress, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing of LAC and PLAC - Supports smooth transitions between classes, phases and settings - Works closely with the SENCO to identify and address SEND needs - Advises senior leaders and governors on LAC/PLAC matters - Maintains confidentiality at all times.

SENCO

The SENCO works closely with the Designated Teacher to: - Identify SEND needs among LAC and PLAC - Ensure early and timely access to assessment and provision - Ensure EHCPs and PEPs are complementary and not duplicative - Liaise with external professionals.

LAC and PLAC are prioritised appropriately within SEND processes in line with the SEND Code of Practice.

All Staff

All staff: - Have high expectations for LAC and PLAC, rooted in a belief in their God-given potential - Understand the impact of trauma, attachment and loss on learning and behaviour - Use trauma-informed, relational approaches that reflect love, patience and compassion - Maintain confidentiality and dignity at all times - Act as trusted, caring adults who model forgiveness, fairness and respect - Raise concerns promptly with the Designated Teacher or DSL.

6. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

- All LAC must have an up-to-date PEP
- PEPs are reviewed termly with the Virtual School
- PEPs include clear, measurable targets linked to:

- o Academic progress
- o Attendance
- o Emotional wellbeing
- o Wider outcomes
- PEPs complement EHCPs where applicable
- Pupil Premium Plus for LAC is used to support PEP targets

7. Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

PLAC do not have a statutory entitlement to a PEP; however, the school recognises their ongoing needs.

The school will: - Encourage parents/carers to declare PLAC status on admission or annually - Treat information confidentially - Monitor progress termly - Use Pupil Premium Plus funding to support additional needs - Work collaboratively with parents and external services, including adoption support

8. Admissions

LAC and PLAC are given highest priority in admissions in line with the School Admissions Code.

The school works closely with the Local Authority and Virtual School to ensure smooth transitions.

9. Attendance

Attendance of LAC and PLAC is closely monitored. Concerns are raised promptly with carers, parents, social workers and relevant professionals.

10. Behaviour and Exclusions

The school recognises the disproportionate impact of exclusion on LAC and PLAC.

- Permanent exclusion of LAC and PLAC is avoided wherever possible
- Alternatives to exclusion are explored
- The Virtual School and Local Authority are consulted before any exclusion decision

11. Training

- The Designated Teacher undertakes statutory training every two years
- Staff receive regular training on trauma, attachment and safeguarding

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body and reflects current statutory guidance, including updates issued by the Department for Education, Sheffield Local Authority and the Sheffield Virtual School.

Appendix A: One-Page Policy Index (LAC & PLAC)

School: St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Local Authority: Sheffield City Council

Virtual School: Sheffield Virtual School

Statutory Framework

- Children Act 1989
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice (0–25)
- Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC – DfE 2018
- School Admissions Code
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

Key Roles

- Governing Body: Strategic oversight of LAC/PLAC provision
- Headteacher: Accountability and resourcing
- Designated Teacher: Championing attainment and wellbeing
- SENCO: SEND identification and provision
- DSL: Safeguarding and child protection
- All Staff: Trauma-informed, inclusive practice

Core Systems

- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) – termly for LAC
- Pupil Premium Plus – targeted support
- SEND assessment and provision
- Attendance monitoring
- Behaviour support and exclusion avoidance
- Transition planning

Appendix B: One-Page Practice Index (How We Support LAC & PLAC)

Our Catholic Ethos in Practice

- Every child is welcomed as a child of God, worthy of dignity, love and belonging
- We live out our mission: *“Let all that you do be done with love”*
- Adults build trusting relationships as the foundation for learning and wellbeing
- Behaviour is understood as communication and responded to with compassion, forgiveness and hope

Universal Practice

- High expectations and inclusive classroom practice
- Trauma-informed, relational behaviour approaches
- Confidentiality and dignity maintained

Targeted Support

- PEP targets implemented in class
- Small-group or 1:1 interventions where needed
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- SEND assessments prioritised where appropriate

Partnership Working

- Sheffield Virtual School
- Social workers and carers
- Parents of PLAC
- External professionals (EP, SALT, CAMHS where appropriate)

Monitoring & Review

- Termly progress review by Designated Teacher
- Attendance and behaviour tracking
- Governor monitoring and challenge
- Annual policy review

Appendix C: Parent and Carer Summary (LAC & PLAC)

Our Commitment

At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child is precious and loved by God. Guided by our mission *“Let all that you do be done with love”*, we are committed to supporting children who are looked after or were previously looked after so that they feel safe, valued and able to flourish.

How We Support Children

- A Designated Teacher oversees support for children who are looked after or previously looked after
- Children who are looked after have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which sets targets and support
- Previously looked after children continue to receive careful monitoring and support
- We work closely with Sheffield Virtual School, carers, parents and other professionals
- Support may include emotional wellbeing help, learning support or help with friendships

Confidentiality

We treat information about children and families with care and respect. Details are only shared with staff who need to know in order to support your child.

Working in Partnership

We value strong partnerships with parents and carers. If you have any concerns or questions about your child's progress or wellbeing, we encourage you to speak with: - Your child's class teacher - The Designated Teacher for LAC/PLAC - The SENCO (if your child has additional needs)

Our Promise

We promise to care for every child with compassion, dignity and high expectations, so that all children can grow in confidence, faith and learning.