

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

‘Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God...’

Matthew 6.33

At St Patrick's Catholic College our aim is to provide a high quality education based upon the teachings of Christ; where all pupils are valued members of our community and able to develop their talents to the full.

True Catholic education is concerned with academic success and is also about helping all young people to grow and appreciate their own worth and value. It is our responsibility to help pupils realise their dignity and discover their own purpose.

We acknowledge that each person is a unique individual and strive to respect each individual irrespective of circumstance, gender, race or creed. We will encourage everyone to develop their unique personality and educate the whole person within a loving and caring Christian environment. To this end we will promote a happy and caring environment within which each individual can develop their potential to the full.

St Patrick's Catholic College believes that in partnership with Stockton Borough Council, as Corporate Parents, we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of looked after children. In order to fulfil this duty effectively, the following roles are important to the college:

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children:

Mrs Michelle Booth

Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children:

Mrs Peggy Swinhoe

Rationale

Looked after children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. The majority of children who come into care are there because of abuse or neglect, domestic violence or parents' drug related issues. As a school we recognise that outcomes nationally for looked after children fall well below national averages and we understand and

support the government agenda to address this disparity. As corporate parents in Stockton-on-Tees we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education
- Listening to children
- Providing stability and continuity
- Taking corporate responsibility
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising standards
- Intervening early
- Promoting early years experiences and post 16 progression
- Celebrating success.

The LMB of St Patrick's Catholic College is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. The Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children 2015, place duty on us to work together to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. We recognise that schools and teachers are at the very heart of this process so that we can provide a good education in order to unlock a bright future and so increase life chances of this vulnerable group. We are highly ambitious for these young people, knowing that securing the best possible progress for them will greatly enhance their life chances.

We recognise our responsibilities as governors and teachers and we actively want to support the local authority in undertaking its statutory responsibility, under section 52 of the Children Act 2004. This is to help this vulnerable group to succeed in education, champion their needs, raise awareness and challenge negative assumptions at all levels.

We aim to give looked after children within our school the best opportunities and support to be safe and healthy, to achieve in education and their career, and enable them to play an active role in their community. Above all, as corporate parents we will preface all our thinking, planning, actions and decisions with: ***"If this were my child I would....."***

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are inclusive of looked after children
- Ensure that all looked after children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and this includes the provision of a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability

- Ensure that looked after children take as full a part as possible in all school activities including extra-curricular activities
- Ensure that carers and social workers and the Virtual School Headteacher for looked after children are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment, attendance and transition arrangements
- Ensure that appropriate intervention strategies are put in place when there is concern about a child's lack of progress
- Ensure that looked after children are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision
- Ensure all staff are appropriately trained to support the needs of looked after children.

Admissions

The LMB has its own Admissions Policy but it does, however, endorse the Stockton Borough Council policy when dealing with applications for looked after children. The Governing Body, as the Admissions Authority for the College, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against looked after children. Due to care placement changes, looked after children may enter school mid-term. It is vital that as a school we ensure that they are given a positive welcome in order that they feel secure. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupils settle.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our Looked After Children Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The LMB will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all looked after children and will be kept up to date via reports from the designated teacher/governor.

Allocation of resources

The LMB will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for looked after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The LMB will hold the school to account for the progress and attainment of looked after children.

Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

The Social Worker for the looked after child should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) – within 10 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care. Wherever possible, the looked

after child should be actively involved in determining their plan. It is vital that the school assesses each looked after child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning and progression.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all looked after children at regular intervals and will provide the Local Authority with termly information in line with the Virtual School pupil tracking system. The school will put in place intervention strategies to support underachievement and provide appropriate challenge for gifted and talented pupils in order that pupils are helped to fulfil their potential.

The school will inform the Attendance and Exclusion Service of any concerns regarding attendance and, if necessary, liaise with the service regarding all matters relating to fixed term exclusions.

Looked after children will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP. The PEP will be placed on line as part of the Virtual School monitoring and communication system.

Transition

The school will ensure that all stakeholders are provided with the appropriate information, advice and guidance to support the smooth and effective transition of looked after children and young people at all key stages.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher will know the names of all the looked after children in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker. The Designated Teacher will also know about any looked after children from other authorities who are attending the school. It is important that the school indicates looked after children status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required. Information regarding looked after children will be stored securely.

Staff will be enabled to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support looked after children and disseminate this professional development to all relevant staff. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to be the focal point in the school for all issues associated with looked after children.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

As a school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable looked after children to achieve their potential. Review meetings, which take place at least every six months, are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting looked after children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual looked after children:

- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Attendance and Inclusion Service
- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service.

Reporting to the Governing Body

In line with the statutory guidance (*The role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for looked after children - Statutory guidance for governing bodies*) the Designated Teacher will provide the Governing Body, as a minimum, with an annual report on the progress of looked after children and young people.

Review and Evaluation of LACYP Policy

We consider the Looked After Children and Young People Policy to be important and we will undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice with key stakeholders each year. The outcomes of this review will inform the School Improvement Plan.

Signed:

Chair of LMB

Governor with responsibility for LAC

Reviewed by staff:

Headteacher

Designated Teacher

Reviewed by Governors: July 2017

To be updated: July 2019 (or earlier if needed)