

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
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Children Looked After Policy

2016-17

POLICY DETAILS:

Legal Status: Statutory

Adopted: September 2016

Version Date: March 2017

Last Review: September 2016

Next Review: September 2017

Responsible Person: Executive Headmistress

Introduction

Designated Senior Persons: Mrs Quinlan, Associate Head of School
Mrs Titus, Executive Headmistress

Governor with responsibility for Children Looked After (CLA): Ms Nowicka

St Mary's Catholic Primary School recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in local authority care. The school welcomes CLA who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Brent.

This policy includes requirements set out in statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 and associated guidance on the education of Children Looked After.

School Vision

Our vision for our school and our pupils is limitless...our expectations for them is limitless.

School Approach

Children Looked After may present with some or all of the following issues

- low self-esteem
- below age expectations for attainment owing to time out of school
- delayed social/emotional/cognitive development
- be prone to mental health issues
- be isolated
- have behaviour concerns
- poor attachment to others
- appear 'private' or secretive

St Mary's Catholic Primary School's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Children Looked After is based on the following principles

- listening to the Child Looked After
- working closely with home, voluntary and statutory agencies
- promoting attendance, through a programme of early intervention, priority action, reducing exclusions and promoting stability within a positive learning environment
- identifying need, including social and emotional as well as learning needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities
- targeting support, including accessing resources from other agencies as well as provision from school resources
- having high expectations

Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Barriers to their progress may include a high level of disruption and change in school placements, lack of motivation or lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Child Looked After can be successful.

Admission Arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements CLA may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and, where appropriate, additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. St Mary's recognises that Children Looked After are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Children Looked After in the school's oversubscription criteria.

Support and Resources

The Governing Board will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Children Looked After, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Staff

The duties of the Designated Senior Persons will include:

- ensuring that Children Looked After are welcomed into the school, necessary meetings are held and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs are identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed
- maintaining an up-to-date record of the Children Looked After in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- monitoring and tracking progress of Children Looked After in school and intervening if there is evidence of individual underachievement
- holding a supervisory brief for all children being looked after and acting as advocates for the CLA in school
- liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage CLAs may face
- establishing and maintaining regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies
- attending PEP review meetings and passing relevant information to all those concerned

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The Designated Senior Persons will keep an up-to-date record of Children Looked After in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated by Social Services within 20 school days of the Child Looked After starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the CLA. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Exclusions

St Mary's Catholic Primary School recognises that Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to exclusions.

Where a CLA is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-agency meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's PEP will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Staff Development and Training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Senior Persons are kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Children Looked After. Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Children Looked After, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Children Looked After who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

Home / School Partnership

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Children Looked After to achieve their potential.

Consultation evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Links With Other Agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Looked After including Social Care teams; Educational Psychologist; Health Services and CAMHS.

Equalities

St Mary's Catholic Primary School takes seriously the responsibility to promote, monitor and review all aspects of school life to ensure we are meeting our duties in respect of the Equalities Act 2010.

The school does not discriminate against pupils of 'protected characteristic' status which includes gender, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy. Therefore, we may make reasonable adjustments to ensure their learning and social experiences at St Mary's are as positive and inclusive as possible.

While we always strive to be fair and transparent, the school recognises that our response to inappropriate behaviour from some children, for example those with a Special Educational Need or a disability such as autism, may need to be differentiated. These principles are therefore also applicable to CLA.