

ST. THERESA'S **CATHOLIC** **PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St. Theresa's
Catholic Primary School



Looked After Child (LAC) Policy

Our Mission Statement

At St. Theresa's School
We learn together
We play together
We pray together
We grow together in the love of God.



Validation grid

Title	LAC Policy
Author (review)	Barbara Folan
Curriculum / non curricular	Both
Associated Policies / Documents	Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour, SEND, Attendance, Anti-Bullying, Exclusions, Equality, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus, Admissions, Information Sharing and Data Protection
New Policy or Review of existing policy.	Review
Date of Submission	January 2026
Date for Review	January 2028

Headteacher Barbara Costa Barbara Costa

Chair of Governors Fiona Kerin Fiona Kerin

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after and previously looked after children are of real concern and must be monitored closely. Children in care may require additional support and consideration in order to ensure they are able to achieve positive educational and personal outcomes.

St Theresa's endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all pupils. While the statutory term *Looked After Children (LAC)* is used within this policy, the school recognises the importance of respectful, child-centred language and will use the term *children in care* where appropriate in day-to-day practice.

With this in mind, the school aims to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and make good progress in their educational, social and emotional development.
- Ensure pupils experience high-quality teaching and a curriculum that meets their needs and statutory requirements.
- Plan support for looked after and previously looked after children realistically and use resources efficiently.
- Promote a positive, inclusive and aspirational culture across all aspects of school life.
- Support pupils to develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EHCP	Educational Health Care Plan
PEP	Personal Education Plan
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
VSH	Virtual School Head

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Academies Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children 2023'

Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC)

Children or young people who are:

- Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Accommodated by a local authority under voluntary arrangements.
- Placed in foster care, residential homes, with relatives or friends, or in supported accommodation.

Previously Looked After Children

Children who are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they:

- Have been adopted.
- Are subject to a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order.
- Were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has an effective policy for looked after and previously looked after children.
- Reviewing policies in line with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Receiving an annual report on the progress and outcomes of looked after and previously looked after pupils.
- Ensuring the designated teacher has appropriate training and capacity to fulfil their role.
- Ensuring pupils have equal access to the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made where necessary.

Virtual School Head (VSH)

The VSH is responsible for:

- Promoting the educational achievement of children in care and previously looked after children.
- Monitoring attendance, progress and attainment.

- Ensuring high-quality and timely Personal Education Plans.
- Acting as an advocate and source of advice for schools and families.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing a designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children.
- Ensuring the designated teacher has sufficient time and resources.
- Reporting annually to governors on attendance, progress, exclusions and outcomes.
- Promoting high expectations and challenging negative stereotypes.

Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The designated teacher, who may also be the SENDCo, is responsible for:

- Promoting the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after pupils.
- Leading and monitoring the development and implementation of PEPs.
- Liaising with the VSH, social workers and other professionals.
- Ensuring effective use and evaluation of Pupil Premium Plus funding.
- Promoting a trauma-informed and attachment-aware approach within school.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Maintaining up-to-date safeguarding records and contacts.
- Ensuring heightened vigilance for safeguarding concerns.
- Liaising with social workers, the VSH and personal advisors where relevant.

SENDCo

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- Coordinating SEND provision for looked after and previously looked after pupils.
- Ensuring SEND needs are reflected appropriately within PEPs and care planning.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Providing consistent support, encouragement and high expectations.
- Maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity.
- Being alert to signs of bullying, emotional distress or safeguarding concerns.

Pupil Education Plan (PEP)

All looked after children must have a current PEP, which forms part of their wider care plan. PEPs are used to:

- Identify strengths, needs and barriers to learning.
- Set aspirational yet achievable targets.
- Monitor progress and impact of interventions.
- Ensure effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding.

Children, carers, social workers and relevant professionals will be involved at all stages.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

- PP+ funding is used to improve educational outcomes for looked after and previously looked after children.
- Allocation and impact are reviewed at least termly through the PEP process.
- The designated teacher ensures spending is evidence-based and outcome-focused.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

The school recognises that children in care are more likely to have experienced trauma, abuse or instability. A trauma-informed, attachment-aware approach is embedded across school practice.

All staff receive safeguarding training and exercise heightened vigilance. Concerns are reported promptly to the DSL.

Mental Health

The school works closely with the VSH and external agencies to identify and respond to mental health needs. Changes in behaviour, mood or engagement are monitored closely, and appropriate support is accessed where necessary.

Attendance and Exclusions

Attendance is monitored closely, and early intervention is implemented where concerns arise. Exclusion is avoided wherever possible and used only as a last resort, in consultation with the VSH.

Information sharing

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met.