



**OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**AND**

**SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

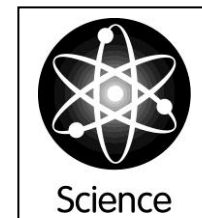
**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY**

<b>APPROVED BY GOVERNORS</b>	<b>DECEMBER 2009</b>
<b>REVISION DUE</b>	<b>DECEMBER 2011</b>
<b>MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER</b>
<b>STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY</b>	<b>STATUTORY</b>



Community

Unity



Opportunity

## **THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Oaklands Catholic School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.

**Designated Teacher for LAC** Mrs Julie Oldroyd

*Aspects of the role are delegated to Mrs Margaret Hough, HLTA, under the supervision of Julie Oldroyd*

The governing body of Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC. We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

- **Stay safe**
- **Be healthy**
- **Enjoy and achieve**
- **Make a positive contribution**
- **Achieve economic well being.**

**The aims of the school are to:**

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that LAC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

### **Who are Looked After Children?**

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- 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 – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be **'Looked After Children'** -LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

## **Admissions**

**If there are more applicants than places available, applications for admission will be considered in order of priority according to the following criteria:**

### Oversubscription criteria

1. Baptised Catholic students who are in Public Care.
2. Baptised Catholic students who, at the time of application have an elder sibling on the roll at Oaklands Catholic School who will still be on the roll at the time of the younger sibling's admission.
3. Baptised Catholic students living in the following Catholic parishes:
  - i. Sacred Heart, Waterlooville
  - ii. St Michael and All Angels, Leigh Park
  - iii. St Joseph, Havant and St Thomas of Canterbury & Thomas More, Emsworth
  - iv. St Edmund, Horndean
  - v. St Patrick, Hayling Island
  - vi. St Lawrence, Petersfield
  - vii. St Colman, Cosham

These parishes will be referred to hereafter as the designated parishes.

4. Baptised Catholic students living outside the designated parishes.
5. Catechumens (see definition below) living in the designated parishes.
6. Catechumens (see definition below) living outside the designated parishes.
- 7. Other students who are in Public Care.**
8. Students who, at the time of application, have an elder sibling on the roll at Oaklands Catholic School who will still be on the roll at the time of the younger sibling's admission.

9. Baptised or Dedicated students from other Christian denominations.

10. Applications from students of families of other faiths.

11. Other applicants.

**Catechumen** is defined as a student who, having been admitted to the catechumenate, is receiving instruction prior to his or her reception into the Catholic Church and whose baptism or reception is expected to take place during the Easter season prior to admission to Oaklands.

### **Inclusion**

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum.

Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all LAC pupils.

### **Allocation of resources**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

### **Monitoring the progress of LAC**

The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the reviewing office or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher will know who are all the LAC 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 LAC from other authorities. It is important that the school flags LAC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

### **Staff Development**

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with LAC.

### **Partnership with parents/carers and care workers**

At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings 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 LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- LAC teams
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service

### **LAC policy review and evaluation**

The policy will be reviewed every two years. The outcomes of the policy review inform the School Improvement Plan

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Rationale for roles and responsibilities:**

Looked After Children – LAC - 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. For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements
- lack of involvement in extra curricular activities
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. To date the outcomes achieved by LAC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents 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
- celebrating success.

This governing body is committed to ensuring that Designated Teachers and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

**The Designated Teacher will:**

- be an advocate for Looked After Children within school
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed, usually by their social worker, as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the school and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, where in place. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any Individual Educational Plan (IEP), Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), career plan or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed, concurrently with the Care Plan, ie: within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to school
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive. The Home School Agreement may be adapted to take into account any specific points around communication, transport arrangements and consent signatures;
- encourage Looked After Children to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
  - the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
  - their attendance compared to other pupils.
  - their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils.
  - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
  - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
  - attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC.

- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. LAC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.

**Systems will be put in place so that all staff:**

- Follow school procedures.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress
- Liaise with the Designated Teacher where a LAC is experiencing difficulties.
- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request for a named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children
- positively promote the self esteem of Looked After Children

**Systems will be put in place so that all governors:**

- ensure that the admissions criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DCSF Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- Be aware of whether the school has Looked After Children and how many (no names)
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Looked After Children;
- liaise with the Head Teacher, the Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met.
- support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body. These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons;
- Review the effective implementation of this policy every other year.