Our mission - 'To create and sustain an inclusive and outstanding learning community for all, rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, in which all will aspire to excellence in learning, teaching and care for one another, so all will achieve and grow as unique individuals made in the image of God'.

Our Core Values;

Faith, Aspiration & Unity

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic and Church of England Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

Supporting Educational Outcomes for Looked After & Previously Looked After Children Policy

Looked After Children Policy – Document Status			
Date of review completion:	**January 2025**	**Named Responsibility**	**A Montgomery**
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body:		**Next Review Date:**	**January 2026**
Policy Basis:	**The School Bus LAC Policy Guidance and T&W Supporting Educational Outcomes for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Document 2024-2025**		

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Statement of intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Holy Trinity Academy endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.
- Working with the wider corporate parenting team we will take an active role in applying the principles of good parenting by:
    - Giving priority to education
    - Maintaining education stability
    - Listening to children
    - Providing stability and continuity and adhering to the individuals care plan
    - Taking corporate responsibility
    - Promoting inclusion
    - Raising standards
    - Intervening quickly
    - Promoting early years experiences and post 16 progression
    - Celebrating successes.

We recognise that in meeting the needs of Children in Care, we will also be providing the additional care and support many other children also need; the needs of children in care often mirror those of other children too.

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of Governors Date: _____

1. Legal framework

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

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2018) 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2023) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DFE (2022) Promoting the education of children with a social worker (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- SEND COP June 2014 - Updated April 2020 SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- SEND Review 2022 - Special educational needs publication June 2022 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- School Attendance Guidance September 2022 - Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools November 2018 - Mental health and behaviour in schools (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Education Inspection Framework September 2019 updated July 2022 - Education inspection framework (EIF) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- School Inspection Handbook Ofsted September 2022 - Schools inspection handbook for September 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- School monitoring handbook for September 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home-school Agreement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

2. Definitions

2.1. "Looked-after children (LAC)" are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents (Section 20).

2.2. "Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)" are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Local terminology

- Taking into account the views of a large sample of children in care within Telford & Wrekin, the terms 'children in care' (CiC) and 'previously looked after children' (PLAC) are the preferred reference rather than Looked after Children.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The **governing board** is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for LAC and PLAC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:
  - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
  - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.

- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns amongst LAC and PLAC.
- Ensuring LAC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of LAC in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the headteacher regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

- Attend meetings organised by the Virtual School to provide updates and training to nominated governors.
- Ensure that a school's self-audit of provision for LAC and PLAC is undertaken.

3.2. The **virtual school head (VSH)** is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's LAC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Working with the school to ensure all LAC in attendance are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for LAC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC as effectively as possible.
- Managing the school's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for LAC.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
    - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the LAC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
    - Inform the headteacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
    - Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, careers and independent reviewing officers understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's personal education plan (PEP).
    - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all LAC.
    - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
    - Ensure the education achievement of LAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.

- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of LAC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The designated governor for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children is Fiona Barraclough.

3.3. The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
  - The number of LAC and PLAC in the school
  - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
  - The attendance of LAC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups
  - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for PLAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

3.4. The **designated teacher for LAC and PLAC** is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to LAC and PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC at the school; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the Virtual School.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.
- Gaining the knowledge and skills to advise and support staff on teaching and behaviour strategies for LAC and PLAC
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is supported and monitored.
- Supporting new LAC admissions to the school:
  - Provide pre-admission support and where appropriate, an enhanced 'welcome' phase in the first days and weeks at the school.
  - On admission of a LAC to the school, liaising with the VS to agree a date for a PEP meeting.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.

- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the VSH to discuss how funding can be used to support the child's progress and meet the needs identified in their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all LAC and PLAC.

The designated teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children at Holy Trinity Academy is A Montgomery (DSL and Assistant Head Teacher) and E Reader (Pastoral Support Officer).

3.5. The **Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is responsible for:

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and VSH.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

3.6. The **SENCO** is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and PLAC.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of PLAC.
- Liaising regularly with the Corporate Parents for Looked After Children – Virtual School and social worker.
- Ensuring timely assessment and intervention is in place through provision mapping and allocation of resources to meet specific needs.

3.7. **All School Staff** are responsible for:

- Being aware of LAC and PLAC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and PLAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and PLAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and PLAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and PLAC.

- Apply a relational approach to LAC and PLAC through developing a deep awareness of attachment theory and evidence-based trauma approaches- understand the young person's journey.
    - Actively seeking advice, guidance or training to:
        - Understand some of the typical issues LAC and PLAC may present, such as early years trauma and attachment disorder.
        - Learn how to respond appropriately to the behavioural challenges these may manifest as, adapting any general policies appropriately.

4. Personal education plan (PEP)

All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.

The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child. The PEP will be reviewed termly.

The school, with other professionals and the child's carers, will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education **provided by the LA,** where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion **(this should be in place on the second day of any fixed term suspension)**
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate. (Attendance data will be drawn down into the PEP from the completion of the online attendance records through CRM)
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
    - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
    - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
    - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that information is included within a LAC or PLAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment. Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

5. Working with agencies and the virtual school head (VSH)

The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers of LAC, in addition to parents and carers or residential social workers.

The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual EHCP review at the same time as a PEP review.

The school will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, suspensions/exclusion, or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and PLAC.

The school will complete daily online attendance records which will enable the Virtual School to monitor the attendance of LAC and react promptly if attendance falls or unexplained absences occur. For some LAC, it is essential that the Virtual School has this information daily. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the Virtual School Head and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

The designated teacher for LAC and PLAC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP. PEP dates are set through the Virtual School and any changes should only be made through the Virtual School.

Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay. The designated teacher will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.

The designated teacher will ensure that the PEP targets clearly show how the PPG will be used. If necessary, this may involve consulting the VS prior to a PEP meeting to gain advice on using the PPG most effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs. This may draw down funds from the school's nominal high needs budget.

Additional funding for further intervention can be requested which can be commissioned through intervention packages. The designated teacher will ensure prompt, consistent and strong communication with the VSH/VS regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.

PP+ for PLAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. The school will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or PLAC, and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

The designated teacher will ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.

The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and PLAC. This may be across a MAT or through network meetings provided by the VS.

6. Training

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and PLAC have either received or identified and prioritised the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Supporting SEMH
- Attachment and impact of trauma
- Attachment Research Community – Relational Approaches
- Attendance/Suspensions/Exclusions
- Homework - raising educational outcomes, supporting carers.
- GCSE options
- Managing, understanding and responding to behaviours which challenge
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

The governing board will ensure that staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC and PLAC safe through training.

7. Safeguarding

The school recognises that many LAC and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.

Where a looked-after child or previously looked-after child has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to absence from education where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a looked-after child or previously looked-after child is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8. Pupil mental health

LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.

The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and PLAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with LAC or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.

To measure, if necessary, the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by LAC or PLAC, a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) will be used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about their emotional wellbeing. Teachers will regularly complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment. Every spring term, an Education SDQ is requested and needs to be completed by schools prior to the Spring term PEP date. This is for annual Education reporting and triangulation with Health & Social Care.

The school's mental health and wellbeing lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC and PLAC, and will always either be a member of, or be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO, or DSL.

The school's SEMH Policy will be adhered to when dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that LAC or PLAC may face.

9. Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

Past experiences of LAC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy and Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' and recognises that suspending or excluding LAC can make them more vulnerable to harm due to not having the protection and opportunities school provides. The headteacher will balance this recognition alongside the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all staff and pupils, devising strategies that take both into consideration.

The school will have regard to Telford and Wrekin's 'Belonging Strategy'.

The school will have regard for Telford & Wrekin Council Rarely Exclusion documentation (published May 2023).

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity. As far as possible, the school will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of the child to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

As part of the termly review of a pupil's PEP, any concerns about their behaviour will be recorded, alongside information on how they are being supported to improve this and reduce the likelihood of exclusion.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy, or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Where a looked-after child is at risk of being suspended or permanently excluded, the school will engage with the designated teacher and the pupil's parents, or other individuals involved in the pupil's care. The designated teacher will contact the VSH as soon as possible to work together, and with other relevant individuals, to consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the pupil's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

The school will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion. In the event of a suspension, the school will ensure that suitable alternative provision will be in place from the first day of the suspension. The school will inform parents and carers that they can seek the advice of the VSHT on strategies to support their child to avoid suspension for PLAC.

Where a looked-after child is excluded, the school will document the provision of immediate suitable education in the pupil's PEP.

Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSHT/VST will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

When an exclusion is being considered as alternatives such as short breaks provision should be considered first. https://forms.office.com/e/TczFuCjLrX

The school will inform parents and carers that they can seek the advice of the VSHT on strategies to support their child to avoid suspension for PLAC.

10. Pupils with SEND

Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews. In addition to following the SEND - Local offer (telfordsend.org.uk). The expectation is that is a child in care is placed on the schools SEND register for support then information is shared with the corporate parent- Virtual School, Social Worker and parents (if appropriate).

The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.

The designated teacher and the SENCO will ensure that LAC and PLAC with SEND are supported in line with the SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

11. Information sharing

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and PLAC are understood and met. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on LAC and PLAC and how the security of data will be ensured in order to comply with the latest GDPR.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an **annual** basis by the designated teacher and the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **January 2026**

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.