

ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



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CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER POLICY

Document Date: Summer 2025
Review Date: Summer 2026

Pupils in St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and very proud of their school. They clearly understand their mission statement, 'Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him.' They can quote scripture to give examples of how they do their best to follow Jesus every day. Pupils explain that if they ever feel worried about something they are confident that adults will help them in a discreet and caring way. They are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the more vulnerable members of society and can reference Catholic social teaching when discussing their work with the local foodbank.

Catholic Schools Inspectorate October 2024

Pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils strive to do their best and achieve well. Pupils are extremely kind and caring. They frequently give up their free time to help each other. Lessons are free from disruption and lunchtimes are a buzz of happy and harmonious play.

Ofsted May 2024

At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children

*Jesus lives in our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us
Follow Him*

School Policy for the Education of Children Looked After, Previously Looked After, Children with a Social Worker and those in Kinship Care



Policy Objective

To implement

- the statutory guidance to promote the educational achievement and welfare of all Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (CPLA) on the roll of our school.
- to outline how our school will promote the education of Children with a Social Worker (CSW) and Children in Kinship Care

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and CPLA

Rachel Brassington

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and CPLA

Sally Curtis

Name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for children with a Social Worker

Carmela Puccio

At St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School we will ensure that Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (CPLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions to achieve as well as possible, in accordance with the [DfE guidance](#).

Intention

As a school, we acknowledge and understand the intention of the [revised guidance implemented in September 2024](#), by the DfE to local authorities, that **extends** the role of the Virtual School Head to use strategic influence with **schools and social care** to improve the educational outcomes for all children known to a social worker and those in kinship care arrangements.

We understand that this new guidance includes all children who are most vulnerable and educationally disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a supportive and stable base for all children and in promoting their academic, social, and emotional development. We understand the need for annual whole school staff training on

trauma and attachment-aware practice in the school, so that all adults, both non-teaching and teaching, fully understand and are sensitive to the barriers to learning that children can experience.

We will create an environment in which all children feel valued, nurtured and that they belong.

Our aim is to establish a safe and inclusive culture within the school to support the well-being of both staff and pupils through an informed understanding of the inter-relationship between learning, well-being and safeguarding.

We will use our school policies and practice to create a '*calm, safe and supportive environment where children and young people want to attend and where they can learn and thrive*'.

We will do this in recognition of the wider context where; '*The behaviour policy is the starting point for laying out our vision and is one of the important ways this school culture is communicated to pupils, staff, and parents and carers*'. **DfE: Behaviour in schools Advice for headteachers and school staff** February 2024. See [here](#) for new guidance.

We know that it is likely that children have experienced loss and educational damage as a result of the pandemic and as a school, we see each academic year as an opportunity to develop our school staff to engage in positive relational practice to enable all to achieve the best possible outcomes and standards.

The Virtual School Attachment-Aware and Trauma-Informed [Toolkit](#) training will support a greater understanding of diversity and equality and will enable all staff to better understand the behaviours of all children.

Our Behaviour Policy is for staff and pupils alike. We understand that positive behaviour management is completely influenced by the relationships we foster between all adults and children who are part of this school, and that learning is taught as well as 'caught'.

Our school's culture and values are manifested through the behaviour of all members of the school community - parents and carers, teachers, ancillary staff, visiting specialists and pupils. Our expectation is everyone within the school will interact with respect, kindness, appropriate boundaries and integrity.

Equality and Diversity:

The implementation of this Policy requires a reflection on those learners who have many overlapping experiences: discrimination because of a protective characteristic, SEND, poverty, other adverse childhood experiences. Supporting these learners to achieve will raise achievement for all. The expectation is that all learners receive a high-quality, ambitious education that is inclusive of all learners. All schools and other education providers must meet their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010. All protected characteristics are supported to enable Hertfordshire schools to provide opportunity for all. See [here](#) for the Hertfordshire strategy.

We acknowledge that we should train all staff to reflect on their professional responses to children and to prevent unconscious bias from affecting aspiration.

Impact

This section sets out the expected impact to be achieved through the implementation of the policy in school.

- A safe and secure environment is provided where educational progress and stability is always central to the planning.
- All adults are equipped with the understanding of the impact that the experience of trauma and neglect can have on the way children form relationships and learn.
- Staff feel confident about relational approaches to behaviour management or regulation strategies that take into consideration what has been learnt from recent research on the effect of trauma on the brain and the potential long-term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- The gap between the attainment of children who have experienced ACEs and their peers is narrowed, **accelerated** and **rapid** progress is made.
- School-based interventions are accessed, even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention see guidance [here](#) and to use the allocated Pupil Premium *Plus* (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- All CLA to have at least termly Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings each academic year and for the joint planning and quality first teaching to have measurable impact on each child's learning on a daily basis (see guidance [here](#)).
- All adults provide sensitive, child-led support, with at least one key adult with whom the child or young person has a trusted relationship and who will act as an advocate for them and take a special interest in their progress in all school activities.
- School systems facilitate nurturing support, which includes strong relationships between school staff, parents or carers and children.
- Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After are positively identified within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for (see guidance [here](#)).
- The Behaviour Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour, and it is understood that all behaviour is communication and staff respond with compassion and care. Sanctions that shame and ostracise children from their peers, school, community or family are avoided. An inclusive culture and positive school ethos is created for every pupil.
- All children and their families feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged in this school community.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is a Statutory Post and in 2025 is Rachel Brassington

She is a qualified teacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and CPLA by:

- ensuring that the CLA or CPLA has access to quality first teaching.

- tracking the progress of CLA and CPLA across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book looks
- ensuring that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently.
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA and CPLA, including attachment theory and trauma- informed practice
- delivering the Virtual School training: 'An introduction to Attachment-Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' to the whole school and update training sessions annually
- providing and attending training and offering advice to the whole school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive, relationship-based and has high expectations for CLA and CPLA
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of CLA and CPLA and staff training needs for working with this group
- working alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead to support and promote the education of children with a Social Worker and children in Kinship Care
- prioritising CLA and CPLA for school-based additional support (see guidance [here](#))
- ensuring that CLA and CPLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status.
- completing the annual Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) of each CLA as requested, to inform their annual CLA health review.

Roles and Responsibilities: Education planning for all children with a Social Worker and those in Kinship Care

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for all children through high quality learning and teaching and a drive to best possible outcomes for each and every child.

Children known to a social worker achieve significantly less well than others at all stages of education and poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends¹.

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for all Children with a Social Worker and those in Kinship Care by:

- attending relevant training, including the Virtual School toolkit training on 'Attachment-Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' (to be found on the Virtual School [website](#))
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead
- referring to the Designated Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead for advice
- developing skills to be able to work in a relational way.

¹ [Review of Children in Need \(2019\)](#)

- promoting a relational culture to help fully engage children and make rapid progress through access to any additional school-based support available and from quality first teaching.
- be aware of the existence of potential unconscious bias about children with a social worker and mitigate against such a situation through careful reflection and ensuring that all decisions about these children are justifiable, equitable and fair.

Attendance:

School attendance procedures will reflect the specific needs of all children with a Social Worker to ensure that they have good school attendance and punctuality. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools, the local authority and other local partners.

Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, the school will contact the social worker and other professionals promptly.

Admissions/ Transitions:

School procedures to support CLA and CPLA during admission and transition are enshrined in the statutory codes of practice for admission:

- prioritising CLA and CPLA at the point of admission

We follow these recommendations for all children known to a social worker who are in the process of admission to the school or transition from school elsewhere:

- there is a swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school.
- early identification of staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support and planning at times of transition.
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities:

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for all Children Looked After (CLA), Children Previously Looked After (CPLA), Children with a Social Worker (CSW), Children in Kinship Care who have special educational needs and disabilities by ensuring:

- that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic.
- that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision
- that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight

- that with the school SENCO, the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained.

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on any child with a Social Worker by: familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy and the current DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2024) [guidance](#) if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Suspensions and Exclusion:

The school behaviour policy is reviewed alongside the Behaviour in Schools (2024) and the new [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, guidance \(2024\)](#).

- We understand that our policy on behaviour concerns the conduct of staff and children alike. We understand that behaviour management influenced by the relationships we foster between all adults and children who are part of this school, and that learning about behaviour regulation is taught as well as 'caught'.
- We understand that the purpose of our Behaviour Policy is to provide all adults and children in our school with a safe, inclusive, learning environment in which everybody is respected.
- We will make every effort to avoid suspending a Child Looked After or Child Previously Looked After, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss.
- Where a Child Looked After is at risk of suspension or exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the linked Virtual School Education Adviser as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
- Where a Child Previously Looked After is at risk of exclusion, the designated teacher will talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking the advice of the Virtual School on avoiding exclusion.
- We will explore alternative positive options which prioritise the young person's learning.
- We will keep the number of days out of the in-school routine to a strict minimum.
- We will always contact The Virtual School for support to find an effective solution which best meets the needs of the Child Looked After.
- We understand that 'where a looked-after child (CLA) is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher (DT) should contact the local authority's VSH as soon as possible to discuss support for the individual child to reduce harm to the child's future education and to plan the best way to resolve the situation'. (Section 60: [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

We understand that the Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty can, in principle, apply both to the suspensions and permanent exclusions process and to the disciplinary sanctions imposed. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, governing boards of relevant settings must use their '*best endeavours*' to ensure the appropriate special educational provision is made for pupils with SEN, which will include any support in relation to behaviour management that they need because of their SEN. Our school procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of children with special educational needs.

The Headteacher, Designated Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the Statutory Guidance and practice outlined in this policy.

Date

Review date

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After

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September 2024