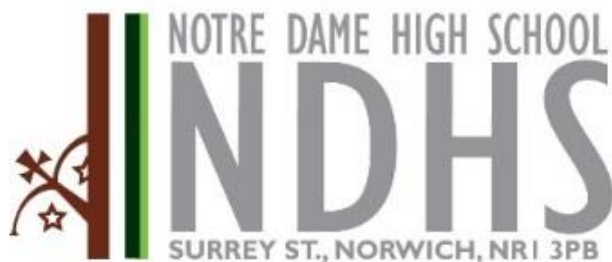


Date ratified at Full
Governors' Meeting
1st May 2025



Review
Pastoral & Admissions
Committee

Designated Teacher for Looked-after Children and previously Looked-after Children policy

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

Part of St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Company No: 7913261

Registered Office: Surrey Street, Norwich NR1 3PB

THE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full
(John 10:10)

We are a joyous and inclusive Catholic school, inspired by the love of God and the teachings of Jesus, specifically faith, hope, forgiveness and peace.

Our community is committed to a rounded education that develops knowledgeable, morally informed and compassionate young leaders.



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact the Company Secretary on 01603 611431 and we will do our best to help.

Designated Teacher for Looked-after Children and previously Looked-after Children policy

Definitions

A **'looked-after child'** is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

'Previously looked-after children' are children who were looked-after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order). This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976, and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

The Children Act (1989) defines the term 'in care' to refer solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'looked-after children' (LAC) or children in care or 'children looked-after' (CLA) by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care – if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- Foster carers
- In a children's home
- In a residential school
- With relatives, or
- Even with parents – under supervision of Children's Services

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- In foster care
- In a children's home, or
- In a residential school

Designated Teacher for Looked-after Children and previously Looked-after Children policy

Notre Dame High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

1. As Governors and staff of Notre Dame High School, we aim to:
 - make a real difference in helping to provide the best possible education for looked-after children and previously looked-after children as much as any other;
 - seek to give our young people in care professional help, encouragement and support, so they find our school a welcoming and friendly place;
 - be fully inclusive and we will challenge negative views and stereotypes;
 - offer support to and work with their foster carers on how to assist the young person's learning and enhance educational opportunities.
2. We will support the Government's agenda for giving all looked-after children and previously looked-after children the same life chances as any other child, in that we want them to:
 - be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve,
 - make a positive contribution to society, and
 - achieve economic well-being.
3. The Children Act 1989 and the statutory guidance *Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked-after Children* (DfE, 2018), place duty on us to work together to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children. We recognise that schools and teachers are at the very heart of this process so that we can provide a good education in order to unlock a bright future and so increase life chances of this vulnerable group. We are highly ambitious for these young people, knowing that securing the best possible progress for them will greatly enhance their life chances.
4. We recognise our responsibilities as governors and teachers and we actively want to support the local authority in undertaking its statutory responsibility, under section 52 of the Children Act 2004. This is to help this vulnerable group to succeed in education, champion their needs, raise awareness and challenge negative assumptions at all levels.
5. *Local Authority Responsibilities.* The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 2004 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked-after children is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH). In Norfolk, Julia Sewell is the Virtual School Head.
6. *Admissions.* Notre Dame High School's admission policy has oversubscription criteria where the highest priority is given (unless otherwise provided by the School Admissions Code), to looked-after children and all previously looked-after children. The school prioritises applications on behalf of looked-after or previously looked-after Catholic applicants above all other Catholic applicants, and non-Catholic looked-after or previously looked-after applicants above all other non-Catholic applicants, in line with the School Admissions Code (DfE, 2021).

7. As school Governors we are aware we can make a significant difference. We recognise that we have a key role and major influence to ensure that the needs of looked-after children are considered at the improvement planning and policy level through to monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes.
8. As a governing body we have introduced a monitoring procedure where we will look closely at the progress that looked-after children are making in our school and identify if there are barriers to their next steps of learning and progress.
9. We have introduced an annual reporting cycle on the progress and performance of looked-after children, to be presented to the full governing body by our appointed Designated Teacher during the summer term of each academic year as a standing agenda item.
10. As a governing body we require our Designated Teacher to carry out the specific duties below in relation to the looked-after children attending this school.
11. We require our appointed Designated Teacher to undertake the recommendations set down in the statutory guidance entitled *The Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities* (DfE, February 2018).

In this context the Designated Teacher will:

- become the central point of contact at this school for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the individual looked-after children we have on roll;
- take the lead role in the professional assessment and preparation of the educational targets and subsequent reviews to be recorded into the relevant sections of the child's Personal Education Plan. The PEP should be established within twenty school working days for any looked-after child starting on roll, and is reviewed on a termly basis. This to include the gradual addition and updating of further information over time e.g. attendance, attainment and progress results;
- attend relevant update training and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding looked-after children;
- ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account;
- establish good working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews;
- provide support and sanctuary to help settle a looked-after child into the school, and at other times;
- ensure that the looked-after child feels safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support;
- ensure the transfer of records if a looked-after child moves school;
- provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required;
- seek and prioritise meetings with, and referrals to, appropriate external agencies in situations that require external support.

12. In addition, we require our school Teaching and Support Staff to assist in the implementation and support of this policy for looked-after children by requiring all staff to:
 - ensure the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained;
 - be familiar with, and respond appropriately to, requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews;
 - respond positively to any request by a child to be the person they want to talk with;
 - ensure that no child in care becomes the victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and eradicated;
 - positively promote the self-esteem of looked-after children;
 - convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.
13. As a Governing Body we endeavour to raise expectations for achievement of looked-after children and encourage them to do well by combining high expectation and standards with inclusion.
14. We will consider and set appropriately challenging targets and in so doing facilitate the appropriate resources in order to support the child to reach those targets.
15. We will monitor and evaluate the impact of our school provision, teaching and learning and support for looked-after children. The annual reporting cycle informs on the following key aspects of provision:
 - the number of looked-after children on roll;
 - attendance statistics for any authorised and unauthorised absence;
 - the frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion;
 - how they are performing in core subjects, their progress and any value added measure when compared against initial baseline assessment;
 - the frequency of them taking part in extra-curricular activities;
 - the attainment relative to the targets set in core and foundation subjects;
 - the provision arrangements for additional support identified to include 1:1 tuition at school and any externally added booster work provided in the care home;
 - the quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP.
16. We are aware that the new OFSTED inspection framework will consider the provisions that the whole school has put in place to support looked-after children. We understand that a judgement will be made within the OFSTED framework in terms of how far this school is able to support looked-after young people. The formal report will include comments about the progress and support provided to these vulnerable young people.
17. At Notre Dame High School, the deputy designated safeguarding lead is also the lead teacher for looked-after children. This group is extremely vulnerable; the most common reason for children becoming looked-after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect, and the school is aware of the need to monitor the welfare and ensure the support of children in this category.
18. The deputy designated safeguarding lead has details of the of the legal status of each individual looked-after child's care arrangements and what the contact arrangements are with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will also know the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.

19. The designated teacher will work with the virtual school head and the child's social worker to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked-after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan and to ensure their safety and security.

20. Since many looked-after children have special educational needs and/ or disabilities, our SENDCO will be closely involved with the provision for this group.

The name of our appointed Designated Governor is: **Mrs Gabrielle Thorpe**.

The name of our school's Designated Teacher is: **Dr Shirley Stevenson**, Deputy Head teacher.

The name of the school's LAC Mentor is; **Mrs Gillian Martin**, Student and Family Support Worker.