



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School
Finding the light in ourselves and each other
Inspired by the Gospel according to John (chapter 8, verse 12)

An aspirational school that encourages every child regardless of their background to 'soar on wings like eagles' in their learning and personal development (Isaiah 40:31)

Children Looked After, Previously Looked After, Children with a Social Worker and those in Kinship Care Policy

Approved By:	Quality of Education Committee
Issued:	Spring 2026
To Be Reviewed:	Autumn 2026



Policy Objective

This policy aims to

- summarise how we will meet 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: Mrs Rachel de la Croix

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and CPLA: Mrs Lee Pocha

Name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for children with a Social Worker: Mrs Rachel de la Croix

At St John's Church of England VA Primary School (*St John's* or *the 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 Virtual School Head Role Extension to Children with a Social Worker (Updated July 2025) 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 have a strong sense of belonging and feel valued nurtured.

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 [school's]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**. We will embed the principles and best practice for [Promoting and](#)



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[supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#). Children, families and school staff are still recovering from the impact of the Covid pandemic. 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 children to achieve the best possible outcomes, and to prioritise wellbeing for all within the school community. 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.

We have delivered the Attachment-Aware and Trauma-Informed Toolkit training to all school staff and will develop a school response based on the principles that it promotes. We have also prepared an action plan to ensure that the whole school takes a holistic approach to the well-being of all pupils. We have delivered further training on relational practice supported by the school's behaviour leads. Our staff feel confident in de-escalation and restorative practices. This whole staff approach to professional learning will help to create an ethos where all of those working within the school feel confident in reporting and evidencing issues relating to equality and diversity. Promoting an inclusive environment is key to the well-being of all pupils, as is a commitment to deepening pupils' understanding of "democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance" (Ofsted 2019).

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 recognise the need to train all staff to reflect on their values, beliefs and professional responses to children. We will promote self-awareness and will facilitate regular reflective space for staff to prevent unconscious bias and to ensure that expectations and aspirations are high for every child.



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, and that progress is accelerated **through appropriate interventions and support**.
- 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 .
- Our 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.
- Other relevant school policies that reference CLA and CPLA or Children with a Social Worker or Children in Kinship Care are in the Child Protection Policy,

(See also the Virtual School 'Kinder by Design' [checklist](#) for revision of school behaviour policy.)



Statutory Educational Planning for all Children Looked After

Statutory Personal Education Plans (ePEP)

The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer, and other relevant professionals. In any one school year there will be at least 3 PEP meetings for each CLA.

The Headteacher and Governing Body:

- will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role and have at least 2 days per year training to remain fully informed.
- will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and CPLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receive appropriate training.
- will also ensure that there is an expectation of significant communication, joint planning, and training with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school so that there is a full and informed response to understanding the needs of children with a Social Worker within the school and a collaborative approach with Social Care.
- will complete both sections of the Report to Governors (formerly CLASEF), to share their plan for improvement and development in school for disadvantaged children and also to inform the Hertfordshire Virtual School of the school's developing policy and practice and accounting for the efficient and effective spend of the PP+ funding for CLA and CPLA.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is a Statutory Post and at St John's (for 2025/2026) is held by **Mrs Rachel de la Croix**

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.



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- 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 ends.

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.
- 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, including Virtual School and Attendance team support, promptly.



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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 oversight
- 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 2025) [guidance](#) if there are any safeguarding concerns.



Suspensions and Exclusion

We have reviewed the school's Behaviour Policy and 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 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 will use the following methods to avoid suspending or excluding a child known to a Social Worker or a child in Kinship Care;

- **Graduated Response / Early Intervention**

Before any suspension, we use a graduated response, which includes:-

- Identifying triggers (trauma, attachment difficulties, unmet needs)
- Adjusting expectations or routines
- Putting support in place and reviewing it regularly
- This is especially important for children with social care involvement

- **Pastoral and Emotional Support**

- We would increase pastoral support, including:
- Regular check-ins with a trusted adult
- Emotional literacy or nurture groups



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- Play therapy, art therapy, or ELSA support (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)
- Use of a 'safe space' or use of the 'sensory rooms' (with support)

- **Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs)**

Where appropriate we will use individual Behaviour Plans (either an Early prognosis plan or Therapeutic support plan) to support a pupil. These plans will reflect the child's background and trauma history.

These plans will include: Positive handling plans, clear strategies agreed with the child and carer and de-escalation techniques rather than sanctions.

- **Reasonable Adjustments**

We will make reasonable adjustments, such as: Reduced timetables (short-term and carefully monitored), movement breaks or sensory supports, flexible seating or learning environments, modified tasks to reduce stress or overwhelmed.

This is particularly relevant if the child has SEND or trauma-related needs.

- **Kinship Care Awareness and Training**

Staff training is provided for attachment, trauma, and kinship care on a yearly basis. Staff understand that behaviour may be linked to loss, instability, or stress. Following our behaviour policy all punitive responses are avoided that may re-traumatise the child

- **Internal Alternatives to Suspension**

Instead of formal suspension, we may make use of:- internal reflection time with adult support, restorative conversations, repairing harm through restorative practices, and short, supervised breaks from class and a possible 20:20:20 model for lunchtimes.

- **Risk Assessment Before Any Suspension**

If suspension is being considered, we will assess the **impact on the child's welfare**, consider whether the behaviour is linked to trauma or care status, show that exclusion is a **last resort** and inform and involve the Social Worker and carers

- **Legal and Policy Safeguards**

Children known to a Social Worker are classed as vulnerable and we act in line with safeguarding duties, we follow DfE exclusion guidance strictly and avoid informal or unlawful exclusions ("sending home")



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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.

Monitoring arrangements

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.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the Quality of Education Committee.

Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives



Children Looked After, Previously Looked After, Children with a Social Worker and those in Kinship Care Document Control

2 nd March 2026	Approved	Quality of Education Committee. Annual review. Updated to reflect changes to the model policy from Hertfordshire Virtual School – September 2025
19th February 2025	Approved	Quality of Education Committee
19th February 2025	Created	Rachel de la Croix