

Designated Teacher Policy

Looked After & Previously Looked After
Children



Review Date

October 2021

Ratified

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Next Review

September 2022

Responsible Directorate

Education

Our Vision



Transforming Lives of our learners

We seek to ensure that all our learners receive a high-quality education from expert staff and aspire to achieve the best they possibly can, no matter their background or ability. Our learners have safe, supportive learning environments in which they develop, grow, and challenge themselves. We are determined that our learners will receive the very best enrichment and opportunities to help them reach their full potential and ensure they are prepared for the future, wherever it might take them.



Transforming Lives of our colleagues

Our colleagues are supported with the very best professional development through our innovative ATT institute, allowing them to stay focused on learning and developing as practitioners whilst they progress in their careers. We share the very best practice across our community of academies to help build systems and processes that really work.



Transforming Lives in the communities we serve

We are committed to actively engaging with and addressing inequality in our local areas. We understand that every one of our academies and their diverse communities are different, so we aim to build a supportive, collaborative, and nurturing relationship with each whilst sharing our key values across our Trust.

**Commitment
to Education**

**Transparency
and Integrity**

**Innovation and
Improvement**

**Dedication to
Inclusivity**

Our Values

Commitment to Education

Our core purpose is to positively impact the lives of all our learners. Education will always be at the heart of everything we do.

Transparency and Integrity

We are proud of our success whilst being open and honest about our areas for improvement. Our actions are always ethical and in the best interests of all our stakeholders.

Innovation and Improvement

We are committed to innovative education- always moving forward and never standing still. Our learners are ambitious and prepared for a future that is constantly changing and developing.

Dedication to Inclusivity

Our learners are all different and all important to us. We aspire to support, challenge, and help each one of them reach their full potential, regardless of their background or level of ability.

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1 | Aims of this Policy

1.1 This policy sets out that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children in each of our academies
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers, and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

2 | Legislation and Statutory Guidance

2.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#).

2.2 It also considers [section 2E](#) of the *Academies Act* (2010).

2.3 This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3 | Definitions

3.1 **Looked-after children** are registered pupils that are either:

- In the care of a local authority
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

3.2 **Previously looked-after children** are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be because of any of the following:
 - A child arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
 - A special guardianship order

- An adoption order.
- They appear to the governing board to have:
 - Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately, and
 - Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

3.3 A **Personal education plan (PEP)** is part of a looked-after child’s care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

3.4 A **Virtual school head (VSH)** is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority’s looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents, and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children.

4 | Identity of Our Designated Teacher

4.1 Our designated teacher is **[insert name]**. You can contact them by **[insert contact details]**.

4.2 Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our academy. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

4.3 Details of the roles of other members of staff who have responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are included in our *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

5 | Role of the Designated Teacher

5.1 **Leadership Responsibilities-** The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:

- Working with VSHs
- Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand
 - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
 - How the whole academy supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Contribute to the development and review of whole academy policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents, and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

5.2 **Supporting Looked-After Children-** The designated teacher will:

- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs
- Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them to make progress, and ensure that this is reflected in their PEP
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place
- During the development and review of PEPs, help the academy and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils
- Ensure that:
 - A looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan – this includes making sure the PEP is up to date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered
 - PEPs are clear about what has or has not been taken forward, noting what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced

- The updated PEP is passed to the child’s social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan.
- Transfer a looked-after child’s PEP to their next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version.

5.3 Supporting Both Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children- The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the academy uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Encourage parents’ and guardians’ involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour, and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to looked-after children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health, and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and understand where the academy can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children.

5.4 Relationships Beyond the School- The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the academy to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children

- Discuss with social workers how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- Be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children’s education
- Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments
- Consider how the academy works with others outside of the school, to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, such as:
 - Finding ways of making sure the latest information about educational progress is available to contribute to the statutory review of care plans
 - Ensuring mechanisms are in place to inform VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action
 - Talking to the child’s social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child’s education, providing advice about the likely impact and what the local authority should do to minimise disruption.
 - Making sure that, if a looked-after child moves schools, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each looked-after child:
 - There is an agreed process for how the academy works in partnership with the child’s carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, to review and develop educational progress
 - Academy policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents
 - Teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips.
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion:
 - Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the academy decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
 - Work with the VSH and child’s carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child’s behaviour.
- where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child’s parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.