



## Designated Teacher Policy (Looked-after and previously looked-after children)

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## Introduction

- 1 Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that children in care are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve and make a positive contribution to society. Nationally, children in care significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. At Alderbrook School we have an excellent record of meeting these objectives for all children and take great pride in doing so.

## Aims of Policy

- 2 The aims of this policy are to ensure that:
  - A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
  - 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

## Legislation and statutory guidance

- 3 This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#). It also takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.
- 4 This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## Definitions

- 5 Looked-after children are registered students who are:
  - In the care of a local authority, or
  - Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- 6 Previously looked-after children are registered students who fall into either of these categories:
- 7 They were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be as a result 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
- 8 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

- 9 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.
- 10 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 students 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.

## Identity of our Designated Teacher

- 11 Our designated teacher is Ms Selina Dempsey
- 12 You can contact Ms Selina Dempsey by emailing [201office@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:201office@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk) or [s201sdempsey@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:s201sdempsey@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk)
- 13 Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.
- 14 Other members of staff who have responsibility in relation to looked-after and previously looked after children are as follows:
- The lead Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection is Ms Ama Thandi who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Deputy DSLs are Ms Selina Dempsey and Ms Emma Jones.
  - The Personal, Social and Health Education lead is Mr Steve Aylin
  - The E-safety leads are Mr Tom Beveridge, Ms Ama Thandi, Mrs Karen Fisher and Mr John Howlett.
  - The Preventing radicalisation Single Point of Contact (SPOC) lead is Ms Ama Thandi
  - The Behaviour and anti-bullying leads are Ms Ama Thandi and Ms Emma Jones.
  - The Attendance lead is Mrs Chloe Barratt
  - The nominated safeguarding Trustee is: Mrs Kelly Pougher. He is responsible for safeguarding and championing good practice; liaising with the Headteacher and providing information and reports to the Trust Board .

## Role of the Designated Teacher

### Leadership responsibilities

- 15 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
- 16 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 students matter and are prioritised

17 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 school supports the educational achievement of these students
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school 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

## Supporting looked-after children

18 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 in order 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 school and local authority decide what arrangements work best for students
- 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
- Make sure 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
- Ensure that 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

## Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

19 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 school 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 school 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

## Relationships beyond the school

20 The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school 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 school 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 school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- 21 Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- 22 Make sure that for each looked-after child:
- The Head Teacher must, as far as possible, avoid excluding any looked-after child. Exclusion from school must be a last resort for children who are looked after; school should inform social workers and carers in order for intervention to occur as soon as a child's behaviour becomes a cause for concern. The Virtual school Head will be notified of concerns regarding behaviour.
  - If a Looked After child is excluded from school for a fixed period, school immediately inform the social worker ,carer/residential staff and Virtual School Head. School will provide work for the child for the first five days of the exclusion.
  - The social worker has responsibility for liaising with the carers/ residential staff about suitable arrangements for supervising the child doing the schoolwork during the day and ensuring the child does not go out during school hours. With effect from the sixth day the school must provide a place for the child to be educated.
  - School will communicate the reasons for the exclusion to the social worker, the carer/residential staff and Virtual school Head. Whoever is the most appropriate one to do so, will discuss this with the child. The social worker must inform the parents, if appropriate.

### Permanent exclusions

- 23 Permanent exclusion of looked after and previously looked after children will be avoided wherever possible.
- 24 If a Looked After child is permanently excluded, school will inform the social worker, the carer/residential staff, and the Virtual School Head immediately.
- 25 The social worker has responsibility for liaising with the carers/ residential staff about suitable arrangements for supervising the child doing the schoolwork during the day and ensuring the child does not go out during school hours.
- 26 For the first five days of the exclusion school will provide work. From the sixth day the local authority will arrange for a place for the child to be educated.

- 27 In the case of permanent exclusion or where a fixed term exclusion exceeds 15 days or more per term, the Trust Board of the school must convene within fifteen days to review the decision made by the Head Teacher to exclude the child. If the Trust Board decides to uphold the decision to permanently exclude, an Independent Review can be made within fifteen school days. The request for review can be completed by a foster carer or anyone who has Parental Responsibility for the child as determined in the Children's Act 1989 and Education Act 1996.

### Alternative provision

- 28 The use of alternative provision must only be used in the following circumstances;
- to improve behaviour (Direction to off-site provision to modify behaviour does not require consent of parents/carers under s29A Education Act 2002 or in the case of an academy their general powers in their Articles of Association).
  - to add value to the child's existing provision (in such cases it is expected that the child will be attending their home school for a set subjects).
- 29 The school will put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure attendance at an alternative provision placement is regular and the child is progressing as well, or better than expected to be. Reviews of the provision must be no less than 30 school days.
- 30 The objectives of the provision, days/times of attendance and duration of provision will be clearly set out from the start as part of the PEP review.

### Part-Time Educational Arrangements

- 31 Part-time education as a whole is illegal, as children are expected to be in full-time (25 hours per week); however, there are exceptional circumstances where a short-term reduction may be appropriate. If school plans to reduce a child's timetable an immediate review of the PEP is required, and as corporate parent consent from the Virtual School must be sought prior to initiating the arrangement.

## Training for those Involved in the Care and Education of Looked After Children

- 32 School and the Virtual School Head must ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of DTL to ensure the promotion of educational achievement of Looked After children.

## Information Sharing

- 33 School will ensure arrangements regarding sharing reliable data are in place, particularly in relation to the tracking and monitoring of attainment data
- 34 School will monitor who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured;
- 35 School has in place procedures in relation to how children and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them;
- 36 Social worker/Carers will liaise with the DTL regarding how to contribute to and receive information;

- 37 School has procedures in place for sharing information between school and relevant local authority departments;
- 38 Any relevant information about individual children will be passed promptly between school, authority departments, when a young person moves. Relevant information should include the PEP, which as part of the looked after child's educational record must be transferred with them to the new school. This is done automatically when an electronic record ePEP is used by authorities.

## Monitoring arrangements

- 39 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## Links to other policies

- 40 This policy links to the following policies and procedures:
- Behaviour Policy
  - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
  - Exclusions Policy
  - SEND Policy
  - Care of Pupils with Medical needs Policy