



Melrose Education
SCHOOL



DESIGNATED TEACHER POLICY (FOR LOOKED-AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN)

Reviewed by:	Henrietta Jordan, Regional Schools Director
Date:	1 August 2023
Last reviewed on:	01 September 2022
Next review due by:	31 July 2024
Version control:	1
Approved by:	Tracey Storey, CEO

Introduction

This policy clarifies responsibilities in relation to looked after and previously looked after children. [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) (February 2018) statutory guidance makes clear that, “Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. Attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to non-looked-after children.”

This policy will outline the action we take to support our looked-after and previously looked after children.

Definitions

In line with [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) (February 2018) statutory guidance, the following definitions are used in our School:

- a child 'looked after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales
 - a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society
 - personal education plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child's care plan and needs to be developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure a looked-after child reaches their full potential.

Role of the Principal and Directors

The senior leadership team will ensure that an appropriate designated teacher is in place and is given appropriate time to attend training. The senior leadership team, through the designated teacher, will monitor and review how looked-after and previously looked-after children are supported and how much progress they are making.

Identity and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

Please speak to the principal who will confirm who our school's designated teacher is and how he/she can be contacted.

The designated teacher will:

- Be a central point of contact within the School Promote - the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child within the school.
- Promote a whole school culture where the personal, emotional, and academic needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are prioritised. This includes ensuring staff have high expectations of these children and see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals with their own stories, rather than one group.

- Ensure staff do not publicly treat looked-after and previously looked-after children differently from their peers, showing sensitivity to who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status.
- Contribute to the development and review of our school policies, ensuring they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage.
- Ensure there is an effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children and that transitions to the next phase of education are supported effectively, including careers advice and guidance.
- Transfer school records to a new school where necessary.
- Promote a culture where looked-after and previously looked-after children can discuss their progress and be involved in target setting, as well as discuss difficult issues with a member of staff where necessary.
- Oversee access to academic focused study support.
- Appreciate the importance of the Personal Education Plan (PEP), having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the PEP within school aligned to the child's EHCP.
- Arrange and Chair all PEP meetings termly.
- 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.
- Be a source of advice for teachers on differentiated teaching strategies and other ways to improve progress.
- Promote good home-school links, maintaining effective communication with carers, parents, or guardians.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies, to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are responded to quickly and effectively.
- Involve parents and guardians in decisions regarding their child's education.
- Maintain links with Virtual School Heads, if applicable, when a child ceases to be looked-after.
- Listen to the voice of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are reflected in how Pupil Premium Plus funding is used, playing a key role in decisions.
- Work with School staff to identify signs of potential mental health issues, recognising that looked-after and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional, and mental health issues than their peers.

Relationships Beyond the School

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.
- 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's an agreed process for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, to review and develop educational progress.
 - School 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 school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary.
 - Working 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.

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy