



**WEAVERS
ACADEMY**
*Creative
Education
Trust*

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

Weavers Academy

Approved by: [Vivien Swaida]

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1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children (LAC).
- 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.
- To work closely with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for LAC.
- To ensure that all policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children and young people.
- To ensure that LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Within the Personal Education Plan (PEP), to provide a differentiated curriculum and additional interventions as required appropriate to the individual's needs.
- To ensure that LAC take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- To ensure that parents, carers and social workers of LAC are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- To ensure that LAC are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

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

3. Definitions

Looked after children (LAC) are registered pupils that 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

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 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

➤ They appear to the Academy Council 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

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.

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

Our designated teacher is Claire Sexsmith supported by Stefan Emary.

You can contact him via email claire.sexsmith@weaversacademy.org

Our designated teacher takes the 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.

Other colleagues who have particular responsibilities in relation to looked after and previously looked after children are listed within the safeguarding and child protection policy.

5. Role of the designated teacher

The role of the Looked After Co-ordinator is of central importance in enabling Looked After Children to achieve their full potential in school. For this reason, the person appointed will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education
- Plan for transition in consultation with the child's social worker and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least a week before the Care Plan reviews.
- Maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required.
- Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate any support for the Looked After Children that is necessary within school liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral team and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage Looked After Children may face.
- Establish and maintain regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage Looked After Children to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Act as an advisor to staff, raising their awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.
- Set up meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the rapid transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored.
- Attend training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding - Looked After Children.
- Ensure that any previously Looked After Children maintain a network of support and remain on a Child In Need Plan, for the following 12 months.

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 Virtual School Heads.
 - 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 school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
 - Allow access to support sessions for all staff to attend to enable them to support any Looked After Students in their care.
- 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.

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 school 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 children 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 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. Previous looked after children will remain on a support plan, on a child in

need plan (CIN) to ensure that when they become a previously looked after child that they maintain regular academic and pastoral support.

5.4 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, in order 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.

6. Exclusions

Weavers Academy recognises that looked after children are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a looked after child is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and provide alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Positive Behaviour Handbook (including behaviour and exclusions policy) for more information.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Claire Sexsmith as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). At every review, it will be approved by the Academy Council.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Exclusions
- SEN
- Supporting pupils with medical needs