



# ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

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

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**COURAGE**

**RESPECT**

**HOPE**

**ENJOYMENT**

**COMMUNITY**

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## Introduction

The Governing body and staff of St Paul's are committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. We recognise that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential and foster care, when compared with their peers, and the school is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in "Guidance on the Education of Looked After Children" (May 2000) and Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.

Children who are "looked after" may be "Accommodated" "In Care" or "remanded/detained" as follows:

- *Accommodated (Section 20)* This is a voluntary arrangement, because parents are ill, missing, unable to cope, or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with the family. The parents retain parental responsibility.
- *In Care* A child is in care only if a court has granted a Care Order which it will issue if it believes a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A care order generally gives parental responsibility to the local authority, or shares this with the parents.
- *Remanded/Detained* A child can be remanded or detained as in the following:
  - an emergency protection order
  - removed by police using their powers of protection
  - remanded by a court following criminal charges
  - a court directing a social services department to accommodate a child (already on a supervision order for criminal behaviour) for up to six months.
- *Looked After Children* may (or may not) have some or all the following issues:
  - low self esteem
  - poor education standards due to time out of school
  - delayed social/emotional/ cognitive development
  - be bullied or bully others.
  - be prone to mental health issues
  - be isolated with few friends
  - have behaviour issues.
  - poor attachments to others.
  - have a need to be very private. This makes them an extremely vulnerable group in terms of education and future life-chances.

The Governing body and staff of St Paul's are committed to ensuring that these children are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children.
- all staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality and issues that affect looked after children.
- effective strategies that support the education of this vulnerable group.

### 1. 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

- 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 provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our looked after and previously looked after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our schools' role to promote and support the education of our looked after and previously looked after children, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [Designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children Statutory Guidance](#)

It also takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

## 3. Definitions

**Looked-after children** 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 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

**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 Kate Robinson, SENDCo.

You can make contact by calling the school office on 01628 521553 or via email [office@stpaulswooburn.school](mailto:office@stpaulswooburn.school)

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.

### **5. Role of the designated teacher**

The Designated Teacher must be a qualified teacher, a head teacher or acting head teacher of the school. The Designated Teacher should keep the school up to date with any changes to legislation and statutory guidance and its implication in respect of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every Looked After Child, PLAC and SGO on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every Looked After Child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised. Most importantly, the Designated Teacher is the child's champion in school and the first point of contact for school colleagues, carers and social workers regarding anything to do with the child's education. The Governing body must ensure that the Designated Teacher undertakes appropriate training in order to fulfil their role.

The Designated Teacher must ensure the Looked After Children and Previously Looked After

Children/SGO records in the school/academy are kept up to date and will include:

- Their status (for LAC care order or accommodated, for PLAC adoption order, Special Guardianship Order, child arrangements order or adopted from state care outside England and Wales).
- For LAC: the type of placement e.g. foster, respite, residential.
- For LAC: Name of Social Worker, Virtual School Head and (for LAC and PLAC/SGO) other key professionals and their contact details.
- For LAC: details of who holds parental responsibility and daily contact names and numbers
- Whether they have an EHCP or receive SEND support.
- Child protection information when appropriate.
- Baseline information and all assessment results.
- Attendance figures.
- Exclusions.

#### **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 school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- 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 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 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
- Use of ELSA staff to support SEMH needs were required
- 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 SEND 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

### **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. Personal Education Plan completion**

- Social worker informs school of a child becoming looked after (or a looked after children entering the school)
- Date is set for the completion of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- A copy of the form is sent to the school to enable completion of educational data
- PEP meeting takes place within 20 days, involving the social worker designated teacher (or other appropriate staff), carer and young person if appropriate.
- A date is set for the next pep meeting Personal Education Plan is taken to the child's statutory review and discussed within the wider context of the child's life. •
- PEP sent by SW to the LAC team

## **7. Confidentiality**

Information on looked after children will be shared with school staff on a “need to know basis”. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the Target setting meetings. Once this has been agreed with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties, complete confidentiality is to be maintained.

## **8. All staff will:**

- as with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of looked after or previously looked after children;
- be familiar with the Guidance on looked after or previously looked after children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a looked after or previously looked after children is experiencing difficulty. These may be academic; pastoral; behaviour and/or attendance issues

## **9. All governors will:**

- ensure that admission criteria prioritise looked after or previously looked after children, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for looked after or previously looked after children;
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for looked after or previously looked after children;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body
- for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.
- ensure that the school’s other policies and procedures give looked after or previously looked after children equal access in respect of:
  - Admission to school
  - The National Curriculum and public examinations
  - Additional educational support where this is needed. Extra curricular activities
  - Work experience and careers guidance.
- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after or previously looked after children
- Ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place in the school even if there are no looked after or previously looked after children on roll at the time and that the Designated Teacher continues to attend training and is up to date in regards to the legal processes.

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Complaints
- Health and Safety
- Medical