A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Designated Teacher Policy

Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children

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1. AIMS

The school aims to ensure that:

1.1 A suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children.

1.2 The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children and supports other staff members to do this too.

1.3 Staff, parents, carers/ 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 should also be read alongside current statutory and Department for Education guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the SEND Code of Practice, guidance relating to the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and relevant guidance concerning Virtual School Heads, children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Looked-after children are registered pupils that are:

3.1.1 In the care of a local authority, or

3.1.2 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:

3.2.1 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.

3.2.2 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 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 **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.

3.5 The school also recognises the extended strategic role of the Virtual School Head in promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker, including those who have previously had a social worker, and children in kinship care arrangements. This extended role complements, but does

not replace, the statutory responsibilities relating to looked-after and previously looked-after children.

4. IDENTITY OF OUR DESIGNATED TEACHER

4.1 Our Designated Teacher is Josie Gallagher.

4.2 4.2Our Designated Teacher takes a strategic lead on 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.

4.3 Our Looked After Children Coordinator is Claire Rylands.

4.4 Our Looked After Children Coordinator takes an operational lead on promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. They will be responsible for the completion of PEP meetings and documents for LAC. They should be included in any contact relating to LAC.

5. ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER AND LAC COORDINATOR

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The Designated Teacher and LAC Coordinator will:

5.1.1 Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children.

5.1.2 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 are carefully considered and prioritised.

5.1.3 Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:

- The factors 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.

5.1.4 Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

5.1.5 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.

5.1.6 Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children.

5.1.7 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.

5.1.8 Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs and previously looked after children's support plans.

5.1.9 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.

5.1.10 Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

5.1.11 Alongside PEPs, use assessment information, pupil voice and information from relevant professionals, to support a holistic understanding of pupils' strengths, needs and barriers. This may include consideration of care status, SEND, disadvantage, attendance, reading, prior attainment, behaviour, suspensions, progress concerns and other identified vulnerabilities. This information encourages professional curiosity, early identification and appropriate intervention.

5.1.12 Ensure that sensitive safeguarding information is managed through the school's established safeguarding systems and shared appropriately and proportionately on a need-to-know basis.

6. SUPPORTING LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN

The Designated Teacher and LAC Coordinator will:

6.1.1 Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs.

6.1.2 Ensure PEPs are ambitious, outcome-focused and informed by a holistic understanding of the pupil. Where relevant, they will consider attainment and progress alongside attendance, reading and literacy, SEND, foundational knowledge, behaviour, wellbeing, aspirations, careers and participation in the wider life of the school.

6.1.3 Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs.

6.1.4 Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses.

6.1.5 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.

6.1.6 Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place.

6.1.7 During the development and review of PEPs help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils.

6.1.8 Ensure pupil voice contributes meaningfully to the PEP process and evaluate not simply whether agreed provision has been delivered, but whether it is having the intended impact on the pupil's educational experience and outcomes.

6.1.9 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.
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- 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.

6.1.10 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.

6.2 Supporting both Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children

The Designated Teacher and LAC Coordinator will:

6.2.1 Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses premium funding.

6.2.2 Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and how to support them.

6.2.3 Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes.

6.2.4 Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging parents to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding.

6.2.5 Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previously looked-after children.

6.2.6 Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus funding is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries about its use.

6.2.7 Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is the portion of the Pupil Premium grant relating to looked-after and previously looked-after children. For looked-after children, PP+ is allocated to the local authority. The Virtual School Head, in consultation with the school, is responsible for ensuring that the funding is used on evidence-informed approaches that address the child's identified educational needs and are clearly linked to a robust Personal Education Plan (PEP). The local authority determines how much funding is passed on to the school. For previously looked-after children, PP+ forms part of the school's Pupil Premium allocation. The school is responsible for ensuring that evidence-informed approaches support the specific educational needs of the previously looked-after cohort. PP+ is not a personal budget or individual entitlement for a particular pupil. Funding may be used or pooled according to identified need and intended educational impact, in accordance with the current Department for Education conditions of grant and menu of approaches.

6.2.8 Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.

6.2.9 Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure other staff also have awareness and understanding of this.

6.2.10 Ensure the SEND Code of Practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed.

6.2.11 Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have.

6.2.12 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.

6.2.13 Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children and how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning and understand where the school can draw on specialist services.

6.2.14 Work with curriculum leaders, teachers and the SENDCO to identify where absence, placement changes, SEND or other circumstances may have contributed to gaps in foundational knowledge. Staff will be supported to establish what pupils know and remember and to provide appropriate reteaching, retrieval, modelling, vocabulary instruction, scaffolding and other adaptations while maintaining an ambitious curriculum and high expectations.

6.2.15 Monitor attendance as a fundamental component of educational achievement. Where attendance becomes a concern, work with the pupil, carers, attendance team, social worker and Virtual School, as appropriate, to understand underlying barriers and coordinate timely support.

6.2.16 Promote equitable access to the wider life of Wade Deacon High School, including the Wade Deacon Experience, enrichment, educational visits, careers, leadership, sport, music, arts and other personal development opportunities. Participation will be monitored and, where barriers are identified, appropriate support and reasonable adjustments will be considered.

6.2.17 Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children.

7. CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER AND CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE

Wade Deacon High School recognises that children who currently have, or have previously had, a social worker and children living in kinship care arrangements may experience additional barriers to educational achievement, attendance and engagement.

The Designated Teacher will work appropriately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, pastoral, SEND, attendance and curriculum leaders and, where appropriate, the Virtual School Head to contribute to the school's wider understanding of these pupils and support a coordinated educational response. The school will access appropriate advice and information from the Virtual School where this would support the identification and removal of educational barriers.

7.1 Relationships beyond the school

The Designated Teacher and LAC Coordinator will:

7.1.1 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

7.1.2 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.

7.1.3 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

7.1.4 Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEND departments

7.1.5 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.

7.1.6 Seek advice, if necessary, from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians.

7.1.7 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.

7.1.8 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.

7.1.9 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.

7.1.10 Behaviour will be considered within the context of the pupil's individual needs and circumstances. Staff will maintain high expectations while exercising professional curiosity about potential underlying barriers. Where patterns of behaviour emerge, relevant information relating to attendance, SEND, foundational knowledge, reading, safeguarding and wider vulnerability will be considered to inform the response. Understanding the cause of behaviour does not remove expectations or consequences; it enables the school to provide the support necessary to help the pupil meet those expectations.

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

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

9. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Expectations for Learning Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy
- Attendance & leave of Absence Policy