



**Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy**

Adopted by Governing Body: 23.06.03

Reviewed by Governing Body: 21.01.20

Next Review Date: January 2022

Statutory Policy: Yes

Designated Teacher: Mrs Holly Townsend

Looked After Children Governor: Mr Joshua McNamee (amended on 12.01.21)

## **1. Introduction**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education Policy
- Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy
- Careers Education & Guidance Policy
- Home/school communication information (in the 'Parents' section on the school's website)

1.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by:

- The Children Act 1989
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After children 2018
- Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children 2018

1.2 Pitcheroak School is likely to have children on role that have been placed in to care by local authorities across the country.

1.3 There may also be previously looked-after children on role, who are no longer looked after by a local authority because they are subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or who have been adopted from 'state care'.

1.4 Pitcheroak School provides a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, emotional and academic development of the individual child and fully recognises its responsibilities for looked-after and previously looked-after children in its care.

1.5 Looked-after and previously looked-after children start school with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences. They have often suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. The gaps in their learning, and in many cases the emotional impact of their early childhood experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience needs careful assessment and planning.

## **2. Responsibilities**

2.1 The governing body ensures that a member of staff (the designated teacher) is designated as having responsibility to promote the educational achievement of

looked-after and previously looked-after children who are registered at the school (including those aged between 16 and 18). This person also acts as the first point of contact for the virtual school and social workers.

2.2 The governing body have an identified member with responsibility for looked-after and previously-looked after children. This member meets with the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children at least termly.

2.3 The designated teacher must be:

- A qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period, has appropriate seniority, professional experience and status to provide leadership, training, information and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children

2.4 The governing body ensures that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training (refer to section 3.1) and is supported to keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after children.

2.5 In promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils, the designated teacher;

- Ensures that the needs and interests of these pupils are considered in the development and review of whole school policies;
- Ensures that all staff; teaching and non-teaching, lunch time supervisors, kitchen staff and passenger assistants, are aware of which children are looked-after and previously looked-after, the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by such pupils and understand the need for high expectations and positive systems of support;
- Provides a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after;
- Acts as an advocate for the pupils who currently in public care, as well as those who no longer are;
- Liaise with carers, family, Children's Services, Foster care agencies and representatives of the Virtual School;
- Ensures all relevant care information is updated for school staff;
- Ensures that effective home school links are established and carers are regularly kept informed of the progress of children in their care (refer to Home/school communication section on the school's website);
- Ensures the involvement of the appropriate support services for any looked-after and previously looked-after pupils in Key Stage 4 and 5 (refer to the Careers education policy);
- Promote a culture in which looked- after and previously looked-after pupils are involved in setting their own targets and have their views taken seriously;
- Will take lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the looked-after child's Personal Education Plan (PEP), in partnership with others, as well as ensuring the child is enabled to contribute to their PEP;

- Will work alongside the assessment co-ordinator to lead on the process of target setting for individual looked-after and previously looked-after children and rigorously tracking their attainment progress;
- Ensures that areas for development are identified promptly in order for appropriate interventions to be arranged (refer to Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy);
- Ensures school representation at Looked After Child review meetings where possible;
- Will work alongside parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and remind them they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding;
- Ensures any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after or previously looked-after children are responded to quickly and effectively.

2.6 Everyone involved in helping looked-after and previously looked-after children achieve should:

- Have high expectations in terms of pupil's engagement in learning and learning outcomes;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a looked-after or previously looked-after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children. This should not however, be allowed to excuse lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- Understand the importance of seeing looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogenous group and not to publicly treat them differently to their peers;
- Appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about with regard to a child's looked after status for example, when celebrating events such as 'Mother's Day', 'Father's Day' etc;
- Appreciate the central importance of the PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child themselves of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve;
- Understand the role of social workers and virtual school heads and how education and the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the local authority which looks after the child.

### **3. Training**

3.1 The Virtual School has responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children.

### **4. Involvement of the pupil**

4.1 The views of the child are imperative. Services should work together with the child to ensure the child's voice is encouraged and heard, particularly through the PEP process.

4.2 When a child first becomes looked-after, it is very important that the pupil knows that staff, on a need to know basis, are made aware of the change in their personal circumstances. How this is shared depends on their age and understanding. It should be made clear that the school, the carers and social workers are working together.

4.2 The pupil's view of their changed circumstances should be acknowledged as well as knowing what information they want their peers to know.

### **5. The role of the designated teacher in developing the personal education plan (PEP)**

5.1 All looked-after children must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan will identify intended outcomes and objectives for the child and provides the framework to work with the child and carers in relation to his/her emotional and behavioural development, identity, relationships and self-care skills. The care plan must also include a health plan and a PEP which are reviewed in partnership with relevant professionals.

5.2 The PEP will form part of the looked-after child's school record and will be forwarded along with other school records if the child moves school.

5.3 The overall responsibility of the PEP is that of the Social Worker. Although the designated teacher takes lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the PEP, it does not mean that they write every part of it. Other staff are expected to contribute to the plan.

5.4 Opportunities for hearing the child's voice should be encouraged throughout the process.

5.5 The review of a child's care plan must be carried out statutorily at six monthly intervals. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who chairs the review will ask about the child's educational progress. It is therefore expected that the designated teacher will review the PEP before the statutory review of the care plan in order to inform discussion about whether the agreed provision is being delivered and what resources may be required to further support the child. It is recognised that each local authority has their own system and format for PEP's. ePEP's are now commonly used to ensure a range of services have immediate access to current information and

so that they can contribute to the PEP. In addition to the review of educational progress as part of the care plan review, most local authorities also require a termly review of the PEP.

### **6. Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)**

6.1 Once the PEP has been completed with clear evidence of SMART targets and evaluations of impact, PP+ will be allocated to help close the attainment and progress gap between looked-after children and their peers.

6.2 Different local authorities allocate different amounts of money for PP+ funding. This is reviewed usually on an annual basis. Additional funding can be applied for in certain circumstances.

6.3 PP+ funding for previously looked-after children is allocated directly to and managed by the school.

### **7. Multi agency liaison**

7.1 The designated teacher role is key to making sure there is a central point of initial contact within the school who manages the process of how the school engages with others from outside the school.

### **8. Exclusions**

8.1 Pitcheroak school does its best to avoid excluding children especially where a child is looked-after. Exclusions are used only as a last resort. The designated teacher will ensure that the authority which looks after a child is involved, at the earliest opportunity, in any discussion/decision regarding potential exclusions.

### **9. Monitoring**

9.1 An annual report on the progress and performance of looked-after and previously looked-after children will be presented to the full governing body by the Designated Teacher.