



## Children Looked-after and Children Previously Looked-after Policy

Person Responsible:	Deputy Headteacher – Care Guidance and Support
Last Reviewed:	New policy
Adopted by Governing Body:	January 2024
Next Review due:	January 2025

## Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and statutory guidance.....	3
3. Definitions.....	3
4. Identity of our designated teacher.....	4
5. Role of the designated teacher.....	4
6. Monitoring and support arrangements.....	5
7. Links with other policies.....	7

## Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for children looked-after and children previously looked-after.
- The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of children looked-after and children previously looked-after, supporting 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.

## 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](#), updated February 2018.

## Definitions

**Children looked-after** are registered students 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.

**Children previously looked-after** are registered students 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.
- Been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because they would not have otherwise been cared for adequately.
- Ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

**Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is part of a child looked-after's care plan that is developed with the school. The PEP is a record of the child's education and training. It should describe what needs to happen for a child looked-after to help them fulfil their potential, it should identify intended outcomes and objectives for the child and provide the framework to work with the child and carers in relation to their emotional and behavioural development, identity, relationships and self-care skills. Bolton use an electronic PEP service run through Liquid Logic's PEP portal.

**Virtual school head (VSH)** is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's children looked-after, working across

schools to monitor and support these students 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 children looked-after. The Virtual School Head in Bolton is Lindsay Nelson.

### **Identity of our designated teacher**

Our designated teacher is Mr Fitzsimons and can be contacted at [mfitzsimons@bolton.sch.uk](mailto:mfitzsimons@bolton.sch.uk)

The main contact in school is Ms McKinnon [mmckinnon@thornleigh.bolton.sch.uk](mailto:mmckinnon@thornleigh.bolton.sch.uk)

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children looked-after and children previously looked after at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Our link Governor is Carol Yates (Governor responsible for Care Guidance and Support)

### **Role of the designated teacher**

#### **5.1 Leadership responsibilities**

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children looked-after and children previously looked-after.
- Promote the educational achievement of every child looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
  - \*working with VSHs
  - \*promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these students' matter and are prioritised.

#### **Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:**

- The things which can affect how children looked-after, and children previously looked-after learn and achieve.
- How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of children looked-after and children previously looked-after.
- Promote a culture in which children looked-after and children previously looked-after are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities.
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with children looked-after and children previously looked after.

- Work directly with children looked-after and children previously looked-after 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 children looked-after's PEPs.
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children looked-after and children previously looked-after are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Involve parents and guardians of children previously looked-after in decisions affecting their child's education.

## 5.2 Supporting children looked-after

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure children looked-after'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 children looked-after'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 students.

**Ensure that:**

- A child looked-after'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 child looked-after'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 children looked-after and previously children looked-after

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of children looked-after and children previously looked-after are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses **pupil premium funding**.
- Work with **VSH** 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 children previously looked-after 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 children previously looked after.
- 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 children looked-after and children previously looked-after in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.
- Be aware of the special educational needs and disabilities (**SEND**) of children looked-after and children previously looked-after, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this area.
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to children looked-after, is followed.
- Make sure **PEPs** work in harmony with any education, health and care plans (**EHCP**) that a child looked-after may have, and to ensure the annual review is linked to a PEP meeting.
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to **identify signs of potential SEND issues** in children looked-after and children previously looked-after, 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, on a termly basis 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 children looked-after and children previously looked-after.
- 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 children previously looked-after and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education.
- Proactively **build relationships** with local authority professionals, such as **VSHs** and **SEND departments**.
- Consider how the school works with others **outside** of the school to maximise the stability of education for children 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 children looked-after 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 child looked-after 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 child looked-after:**

- 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 child looked-after is at risk of suspension or permanent 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 suspension 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 child previously looked-after is at risk of exclusion, **talk to the child's parents or guardians** before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding suspension.
- There is also support for **transition** between schools in the admissions code whereby children looked after and children previously looked after have priority (criteria 1) when moving phases in education.

**Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- [Behaviour](#)
- [Child protection and safeguarding](#)
- [Exclusions](#)
- [SEND](#)
- [Supporting students with medical needs](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [Pupil Premium Policy](#)