



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

Review Date:	Spring 2024
Next review date:	Spring 2025
Person in charge:	Headteacher Mrs. S. Armstrong
Link Governor Safeguarding:	Mrs. J. Thompson
Vulnerable Groups and Inclusion Link Governor:	Mr. G. Musson

## **Mission and Vision**

At Benedict Biscop C.E. Academy, part of Northern Lights Learning Trust, we aim to ***serve our community*** by providing an ***education of the highest quality*** within the context of ***Christian belief and practice***. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of ***faith*** and promote ***Christian values*** through the ***experience*** we offer to all our pupils.

Our vision is **'With God, all things are possible'**, which comes from Matthew 19 V26.

We believe that ***each and every learner*** is completely unique and special to God and it is our role as a school, to enable them to ***flourish*** in their potential as a uniquely created and wonderfully made child of God.

High quality relationships between all members of school, staff and pupils, and the relationship with parents and carers is hugely important in enabling our children to flourish and achieve. Jesus was clear in his instructions to the disciples on this matter: 'Love your neighbour as yourself' – Matthew 22 V39.

Our pastoral work at school will strive to meet the significant challenge to create and maintain such relationships in ways which reflect the Gospel. Those who are school staff and in particular those in leadership roles, which include all who have a particular responsibility, ensure that by their personal example they set the highest standards expected.

It is from this premise that Christian love will pervade all aspects of life at Benedict Biscop C.E. Academy. It will influence how we reward and teach discipline. It will affect how we value work and the achievements of pupils and staff. It will be seen in the way in which the school environment is created and cared for, in the way in which the needs of pupils, parents, and community are met, and in the way in which teaching and non-teaching staff work together effectively as a team. Pastoral care pervades all aspects of school life and therefore will be reflected in the way the school is organised and the way policies are written and implemented.

As part of Benedict Biscop C.E. Academy and Northern Lights Learning Trust, leaders, governors and staff are supported to fulfil their mission, in the way in where staff work together effectively as a team.

By working together in this way, we will create a unique, purposeful learning environment that enables ***all children*** to flourish and achieve. We will support and teach children to overcome challenges they face, and to believe they can make a positive contribution to the local and global community, no matter what.

**Our Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children Policy is part of the school's pastoral system and safeguarding arrangements.**

## **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to set out the commitment of Benedict Biscop C.E. Academy to the promotion of good educational outcomes for children and young people who enter, remain in, and pass through, public care.

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

## **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.

## **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 Local Governing Body 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.

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusions
- SEND Policy and Local Offer
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Admissions

**We will:**

- Create an environment which provides continuity and stability
- Help to build self-confidence and self-esteem
- Work in partnership with parents or LAs
- Encourage robust home-school links
- Support and improve educational progress and promote achievement
- Ensure that the LAC has equal access to the Academy Curriculum and associated assessments
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for LAC
- Develop close liaison with, and effective co-operation between, all relevant agencies eg Children's Services, Department of Health, Attendance services

## **Identity of our designated teacher**

Our designated teacher is Gemma Clark (Deputy Headteacher)

You can contact them by calling the school office on 0191 5947033

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.

## **Role of the designated teacher**

The following is based on the responsibilities listed in the [Department for Education's statutory guidance](#).

### **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 Mrs. S. Armstrong 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

### **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

### **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 plus funding
- 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
- 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
- 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 funding

- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus 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 such as attendance, homework and behaviour
- Be aware of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure other staff 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 how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, 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
- 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

### **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 SEND 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

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the Local Governing Body.

The Local Governing Body and staff within the academy are committed to providing an inclusive range of high-quality learning opportunities for everyone involved with the school and community. We will ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to access the full range of provision available through our schools and will actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation.

The Local Governing Body will ensure that the Designated Teacher is supported fully in this role, ensuring that they have access to appropriate training [linked to Sunderland's online PEP management system] and supervision. Time will be given for the staff member to complete monitoring of progress towards targets and for liaising with families and services.