

HEATHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Looked After Children Designated Teacher Policy

(Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children)

Date adopted by Governors:	Awaiting Ratification
Date for policy review:	Nov 2024
Person responsible for review:	Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children - Jenny Verhofstad
Signed by Chair of Governors	Awaiting Ratification

1. Aims

Heathcote Primary ensures that a suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children in order to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children. They also take the lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school, supporting members of staff to do the same and staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

Our designated teacher is Jenny Verhofstad who can be contacted through:

- Email: verhofstad.j@welearn365.com
- Telephone 01926 290330

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance which can be also found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association and takes into account [section 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

3. Definitions

Children in Care (CiC) 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

Children previously in Care 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 Child in Care 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 children in care, 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 children previously in care.

The current Virtual Head in Warwickshire is **Deena Moorey** who can be contacted through the Local Education Authority website by:

- Email: virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk
- Telephone 01926 742018

4. Role of the designated teacher

Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children in care and previously in care.
- Promote the educational achievement of every child in care and previously in care 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 children in care and previously in care 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 children in care and previously in care
- Promote a culture in which children in care and previously in care 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 in care and previously in care
- Work directly with children in care and previously in care 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 in care's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children in care and previously in care are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of previously children in care in decisions affecting their child's education

Supporting children in care

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure children in care'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 in care'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 child in care'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 in care'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 children in care children and previously in care

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of children in care and previously in care are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for children in care can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of children previously in care 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 in care
- 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 in care and previously in care in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of children in care and previously in care, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- 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 (EHC) plans that a child looked-after may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEND issues in children in care and previously in care, 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 children in care and previously in care and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for children in care, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs

- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of children previously in care

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 in care and previously in care
- 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 in care 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, 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 in care 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 in care 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 children previously in care, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each child in care:
 - 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 in care is at risk of suspension:
 - 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 in care is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding suspension.

5. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Designated Teacher and approved by the School Standards Committee.

6. Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Building Positive Relationships
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Exclusions
- SEND
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs