

The City of Leicester College



Designated Teacher Policy

(Looked-after and previously looked-after children)

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Chair of Governors:	<i>J S Andrews</i>	

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1. Introduction

Nationally, children who are looked after significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After and previously Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing. Helping Looked After and previously Looked After Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for The City of Leicester College.

2. Aims

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

3. Definitions

Looked-after children 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

Previously looked-after children 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

- 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

4. Key Staff

The name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After and previously Looked After Children in our school is:

- Laura Pennifold

The name of the Lead Mentor for Looked After and previously Looked After Children in our school is:

- Daren Amoo

The name of the Governor, to support the named teacher for Looked After and previously Looked After Children in our school is:

- John Andrews

The Role of the Designated Teacher is to:

- Promote a culture within the school whereby staff have a good understanding of the specific educational needs of LAC and the barriers they face.
- Ensure that LAC are not disadvantaged under school policies by contributing to the development and review of school policies that actively support the education of LAC.
- Ensure LAC have a dedicated mentor within the school who can offer them support.
- Foster a culture of high expectations for LAC in staff and help raise the aspirations of Looked After and previously Looked After Children.
- Be responsible for the oversight of the development and monitoring of PEPs within the school and setting targets for LAC.
- Liaise with social workers and Virtual Schools regarding individual children regarding their PEP and any associated issues with their learning.
- Develop a good understanding of care planning and how the PEP fits into the wider picture of the child's care.
- Promote best practice in helping LAC learn and achieve and helping staff to assess children's preferred learning styles and consider appropriate teaching strategies.
- Disseminate information to staff on how to provide effective support to individual Looked After and previously Looked After Children in order to maximise their opportunities.
- Liaise with and report annually to the board of governors on outcomes for LAC.

Oversee transitions of LAC to and from the school and transfer of information to the advocate for LAC and pursue all resources and educational opportunities on their behalf.

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 student premium funding

- › Work with VSHs to agree how student premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- › Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about student premium funding and other support for these children
- › Play a key part in decisions on how student premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- › Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how student 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 like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- › Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers 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 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
- › 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 SEN 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

The role of the Lead Mentor is to:

- Liaise with carers to support home learning.
- Liaise with the students and be a point of contact for them during their school day
- Provide mentoring support on 1:1
- Help LAC become involved in the PEP planning process and ensure the 'voice of the child' and their views are taken into account
- Identify additional learning opportunities and resources for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Chair PEP meetings

The role of the school Governor is to:

- Ensure that the school provides a good framework of support for looked-after and previously looked-after children attending the school.
- Follow the relevant statutory guidance.
- Appoint a suitably qualified teacher with the necessary experience and status as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children per Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.
- Ensure the designated teacher receives the full support needed to carry out their role effectively, including training and development opportunities so that they are able to increase their knowledge and understanding
- Ensure adequate time and resources are made available for the designated teacher to carry out their duties
- Ensure the designated teacher has opportunities to disseminate knowledge and information to other staff members so that the school environment is one that supports and continually

monitors the effectiveness of school policies and the role of the designated teacher on outcomes for looked-after and previously looked-after children pupils via an annual report provided by the designated teacher

- Act on any concerns raised by the designated teacher or arising from any other source with regard to promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The role of all staff:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After and previously Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After and previously Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After and previously Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After and previously Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After and previously Looked After Children.
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

The role of the foster carer is to:

- Support the child's education and encourage them to achieve.
- Liaise with the child's social worker to agree tasks and areas of responsibility relating to the child's education.
- Contribute to the development and review of the child's PEP.
- Be the main point of contact for the school on a day to day basis and sign the home school agreement.
- Support the child to attend school regularly and engage in school activities and ensure adequate support at home for the child to carry out homework.
- Carry out any allocated tasks relating to the child's education and fulfilment of the corporate parenting role as set out in the child's placement plan.
- Attend parent's evenings and school performances that the child is involved in.
- Receive training and support that enables them to engage effectively with the education system and advocate for the child.
- Take an active interest in the child's education and provide a home environment that actively encourages learning.
- Ensure the child has access to books and materials to support their education.
- Ensure homework and revision is completed.
- Promote regular school attendance and good behaviour.
- Liaise with the school to deal with any arising issues.

The City of Leicester College understands its responsibilities in supporting and encouraging the educational development and achievement of LAC. In addition to allocating a named Staff Member and Governor for of looked-after and previously looked-after children, we work closely with the Virtual Schools Team to ensure we are fulfilling requirements as set out by the Local Authority.

5. Virtual School Team

The role of the Virtual school team involves working with a wide range of professionals to improve the educational outcomes, and therefore the life chances, of all Looked After and previously Looked After Children, young people and care leavers for whom Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Sandwell Council are the corporate parent.

Aims of the Virtual School Team

- Promote the emotional well-being and educational achievement of all the children and young people in the care of Leicester City Council;
- Encourage a deeper understanding of the issues facing children and young people who have experienced separation and loss and how this impacts upon attainment and achievement;
- Improve and maintain excellent school attendance;
- Work with schools to avoid exclusions;
- Work with schools, carers and the young people to raise attainment and accelerate progress;
- Encourage young people to participate in a range of activities in and out of school relevant to their interests and abilities;
- Promote effective multi-agency working that benefits all Looked After and previously Looked After Children and young people.

6. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

PEP is a mechanism for promoting and prioritising the education of young people in public care and is a statutory requirement. The City of Leicester College ensures that there is a PEP for every LAC in our school, and we ensure that PEPs are revisited and reviewed 3 times each year - once in each school term. The planning process for PEP meetings will be carried out in collaboration between our school, the social worker, the carer, the young person and the Virtual School Team. The designated person for LAC in our school, Laura Pennifold will ensure regular meetings take place and that they are the single point of contact for all LAC in our school.

The City of Leicester College completes all PEPs on an on line template using Local Authority Procedures and will seek advice from the Virtual Schools Team as necessary. The designated teacher and deputy for Looked After and previously Looked After Children will work with the Virtual school team in ensuring all PEPS are completed to a very high standard taking into consideration the child's voice.