

# Children Looked After Policy including the Role of the Designated Teacher



## Old Park School

### Person Responsible:

Ms C.Read (Assistant Headteacher)

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### 1. Aims

The school aims to

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in and promotes the abilities and potential of all children.
- Identify our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Ensure a suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Ensure the designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Liaise with staff, parents, carers and guardians to make sure they are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

### 2. 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. This can be found at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683556/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

It also takes into account section 20 and section 20A of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008.

### 3. Definitions

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is **'looked after'** by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)

- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term **'In Care'** refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the Court under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with Foster Carers, in a Children's Home, in a Residential School, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are **'accommodated'** by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school.

**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 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 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.

#### 4. Roles of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Identify a nominated Governor for looked-after and previously looked-after children who will link with the Designated Teacher, receive regular progress reports and provide feedback to the Governing Body.
- Ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Support the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are met.
- Review the effective implementation of this policy.

Our designated teacher is Miss C Read.

You can contact them by calling 01384 818905 or email [cread@old-park.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:cread@old-park.dudley.sch.uk)

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of Children 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.

Class teachers also play an active role in supporting the designated teacher.

## 5. 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 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 Virtual School Head teachers (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

The class teacher will:

- 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 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

### 5.2 Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- 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

### 5.3 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 funding
- Work with VSHs 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 previously looked-after children 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 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 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 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 mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children
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### 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 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

## 6. Personal Education Plans (PEP)

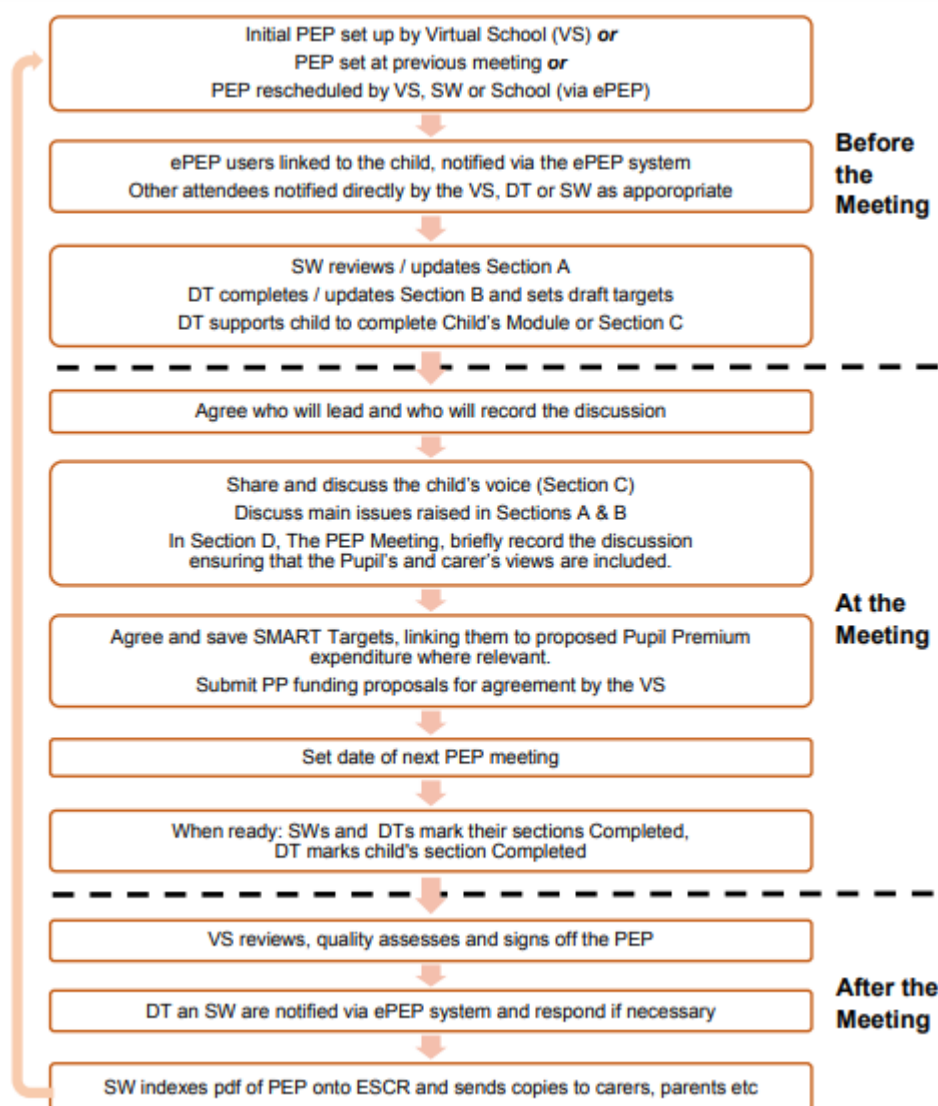
It is a statutory requirement that every child looked after (CLA) has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that should be monitored and updated, as part of the Care Plan, every six months. At Old Park School we use ePEP online.

A PEP is a way of monitoring and supporting the education of a young person in care.

- It is a mechanism for consulting, listening to and involving the young person in their educational experience.

- The PEP should be preventative. It should minimise delay, flagging up particular needs and lead to priority action.
- The process should strengthen joint working and corporate parenting.
- The PEP is intended to enhance stability, achieve continuity and raise the expectations and self-esteem of the young person.
- It acknowledges achievement and celebrates success.
- PEPs are an essential mechanism for tracking children's progress and ensuring that appropriate and timely support is in place to raise attainment.

The PEP process is detailed below.



## 7. Monitoring arrangements

- The designated teacher will meet on a termly basis with the Governor for Children Looked After.
- The designated teacher will provide a termly report for Governors on the achievements and current status of the school's CLA. This will include: attendance figures, exclusion issues, changes in home placements, reviews and interventions to raise achievement.
- The report should include intervention strategies and where Pupil Premium money has been spent as well as the impact this spending has had.
- The report should also include information about non-academic progress in extra - curricular activities.

- The Governing Body will monitor and evaluate the progress made by individuals and all the children using the same criteria used for other children in the peer group.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.