

The Charter School Bermondsey

Designated teacher policy

(looked-after and previously looked-after children)

Author(s)	Trust Director of Operation
Approved by Trust DSL	27 June 2024
Last reviewed on:	June 2024
Next review due by:	June 2027

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and statutory guidance	2
3. Definitions	3
4. Roles and responsibilities	3
5. Identity of the designated teacher at The Charter School Bermondsey	4
6. Role of the designated teacher	4
7. Monitoring arrangements	8
8. Links with other policies	8

1. Aims

Many Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have SEND. The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their Last updated progress.

The designated teacher role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice for supporting LAC and PLAC becomes universal. The support that schools and designated teachers give to LAC and PLAC should not be seen in isolation – it will work alongside other support mechanisms offered by other agencies.

The Charter Schools Education Trust (the 'Trust') and its schools aim to ensure that:

A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children in each school

The designated teacher works with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked-after

The designated teacher is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of 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

Each school within the Trust will adopt this policy and publish with the details specific to their setting.

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](#) 2018.

It also considers [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children (LAC) 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 (PLAC) 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 Trust 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 and responsibilities

The Trust Board will:

- Ensure that each of its schools has an up-to-date Designated Teacher Policy
- That the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and DFE guidelines
- the Trust Board receives regular safeguarding reports which includes the number of LAC in each school.

The Local Governing Board (LGB) will:

- Monitor the school's strategic approach to supporting LAC/PLAC
- Ensure that resources are allocated to meet the needs of LAC/PLAC
- Ensure that the Designated teacher is appropriately qualified and experienced, and that they receive appropriate training.
- Hold the school leadership to account for the support and progress of any LAC and PLAC pupils

The Headteacher will:

- appoint the Designated teacher and ensure that they have the time and resources required to carry out the role effectively
- ensure that the Designated teacher has received appropriate training
- be responsible for all systems to support LAC
- report to the CEO and LGBs on an annual basis on the following:
 - the number of looked after pupils in their school
 - an analysis of assessment data as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
 - the attendance of LAC/PLAC pupils, compared to other pupils
 - the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
 - the number of complaints
- Ensure that LAC/PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum

5. Identity of the designated teacher at The Charter School Bermondsey

Our designated teacher is Claire Hayward (SENCO)

They can be contacted by email on chayward@charterbermondsey.org.uk

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.

In the absence of Claire Hayward you can also contact Patrick Haverty, Designated Safeguarding Lead on phaverty@charterbermondsey.org.uk.

6. Role of the designated teacher

6.1 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 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 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

6.2 Supporting looked-after children

Listening to the voice of LAC and PLAC is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs. This may include the following actions:

- Being available and taking the time to get to know the child
- Noticing if they are upset or angry and listen to them when they need help
- Understanding their experience of being looked after
- Understanding how their experiences will affect their behaviour

The designated teacher will, by delegation to the Heads of Year, Curriculum Leaders and Teachers:

- Make sure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by liaising with the Curriculum Leaders to ensure teachers assess each child's specific educational needs
- Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs
- Liaise with Curriculum Leaders/ Class Teachers to monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, liaise with Curriculum Leaders/ Class Teachers 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

6.3 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The designated teacher will, in partnership with the Heads of Year, Curriculum Leaders and Teachers:

- 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, 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
- Work with the school's Clinical Psychologist to 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
- Work with the school's Clinical Psychologist to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

6.4 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:

The experiences of LAC and PLAC can impact their behaviour – this needs to be remembered when considering how best to support these pupils with their learning needs and the design and application of behaviour policies.

Trustees, Governors, headteachers and designated teachers must have regard to the statutory 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' guidance.

In line with this guidance, headteachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding any looked-after child.

Where a Looked after Child is at risk of exclusion the designated teacher will:

- 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, the Designated Teacher will talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead or sooner if DfE guidance changes.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- School Behaviour/Positive discipline Policy
- Trust Child protection and safeguarding Policy
- Trust Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Trust SEND Policy
- Trust Supporting pupils with medical needs Policy