



**Holyhead**  
Teach What Matters

# Designated Teacher For Looked After And Previously Looked After Children Policy

Date policy last reviewed:

Autumn 2024

Policy Lead:

D Denny

Signed by:

Date 24 October 2024

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Principal

Date 24 October 2024

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Chair of Governors



**Details of the Changes**

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## **Designated Teacher For Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy**

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## **Designated Teacher For Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy**

### **Statement of intent**

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for LAC and PLAC are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Holyhead school endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for LAC realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

### **1. Aims**

#### **1.1 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

### **2. Legislation and statutory guidance**

#### **2.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.**

#### **2.2 It also takes into account section 20 and section 20A of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.**

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

### **3. Definitions**

3.1 Looked-after children are registered students that are:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

3.2 Previously looked-after children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

#### **3.3 Personal education plan**

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.

#### **3.4 Virtual School Head (VSH)**

Virtual School Head 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. Identity of Holyhead's Designated Teacher**

4.1 Holyhead's designated teacher is: Debbie Denny.

Contact details are: D. Denny using the following email address;  
[ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk](mailto:ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk).

- 4.2 The Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school.

## **5. Role of the designated teacher for LAC and PLAC**

### **5.1 Leadership responsibilities**

#### **5.1.1 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 to promote the education of LAC and PLAC.
  - Promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of these students matter and their personal, emotional and academic needs 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 students. This includes ensuring that all staff have high expectations of LAC and PLAC and are aware of how these students may be impacted by their experiences.
- 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

## 5.2 Supporting looked-after children - PEPs

### The PEP and its importance

#### 5.2.1 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 students

#### 5.2.2 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 designated teacher will work closely with other staff in the school to make sure the child's progress is rigorously monitored and evaluated.
- 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.
- If the child has SEND the SENCO will also contribute to the PEP.

## 5.3 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

#### 5.3.1 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
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and the 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 VSH 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 plus funding
- 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
- 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.

### 5.3.2 Voices of the child



Listening to the voice of LAC and PLAC is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs. The Designated Teacher at Holyhead school will:

- be available and take the time to get to know the child
- notice if they are upset or angry and listen to them when they need help
- understand their experience of being looked after
- understand how their experiences affect their behaviour.

#### 5.3.3 Pupil premium

LAC and PLAC are eligible to receive pupil premium funding. The designated teacher will ensure that the needs of LAC and PLAC are reflected in how the school uses the pupil premium to support these children.

For LAC, VSHs are responsible for managing the funding given to LAs for the children in their care. They will work with the school to ensure the funding is used to help deliver the outcomes identified in the children's PEPs.

#### 5.3.4 Raising awareness and staff training

The designated teacher's role will ensure that they, and other school staff, have strong awareness, training and skills around the specific needs of LAC and PLAC and how to support them. The designated teacher will maintain strong links to VSHs to access training and keep up-to-date with research and good practice.

### 5.4 Relationships beyond the school

#### 5.4.1 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. Safeguarding**

- 6.1 The school recognises that many LAC and PLAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.
- 6.2 All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practised in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and PLAC as soon as possible.
- 6.3 Where a looked-after child or previously looked-after child has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to absence from education where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.
- 6.4 The headteacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of LAC and PLAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.
- 6.5 Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or PLAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 6.6 When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a LAC or PLAC is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the school will collaborate in the multi-agency strategy discussion where appropriate to determine the pupil's welfare and plan rapid further action as necessary. The school's representative at any strategy discussion meetings will be sufficiently senior, skilled and experienced, and authorised to make decisions on the school's behalf. Information and analysis about the pupil and their family will be provided as required.
- 6.7 Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a looked-after child or previously looked-after child is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

## **7. Pupil Mental Health**

- 7.1 LAC and PLAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which can impact their behaviour and education. The designated teacher will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

- 7.2 The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and PLAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.
- 7.3 The school understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and PLAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the designated teacher will ensure that they, and all staff who maintain regular contact with LAC or PLAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.
- 7.4 A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used on a termly basis to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC and PLAC's current emotional wellbeing. Teachers will complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.
- 7.5 The school's senior mental health lead will work alongside the designated teacher to promote the wellbeing and mental health of LAC and PLAC, and will always either be a member of, or be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO, or DSL.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by Debbie Denny. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

- 9.1 This policy links to the following policies and procedures:
- Behaviour Management Policy
  - Child protection and safeguarding Policy
  - Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
  - SEND Policy