

Designated Teacher Policy (Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children)

(in conjunction with the Peninsula Multi Academy Trust)

Document owner	AHT Behaviour and Attitudes
Committee	Curriculum
Frequency of review	Annually
Date of last review	Autumn 2023
Date approved by Governors	November 2023
Date of next review	Autumn 2024

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for children looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of children 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

This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#). It also takes into account [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

This policy complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

3. Definitions

When looked-after children (CLA) 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 (PLAC) 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 Body 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 CLA 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 students 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 PLAC.

4. Identity of our Designated Teacher

Our Designated Teacher at Weatherhead High School is Miss H Crawford, Assistant Headteacher. However, from November 2023 to June 2024, Miss H Crawford's leave will be covered by Mrs E Jones, who will be acting as Designated Teacher until Miss H Crawford's return.

Miss Crawford (Mrs E Jones) takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of CLA and PLAC children at our school and oversees all Key Stages. This includes guidance and support from Miss R Byrne, Deputy Headteacher and Director of Sixth Form, in regards to the provision for Year 12 and 13 students.

Our designated support worker for CLA and PLAC at Weatherhead High School is Mrs N Slater.

Mrs Slater will be your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below. You can contact her by telephone on 0151 631 4400 ext 236 or via email to schooloffice@weatherheadhigh.co.uk.

5. Role of the Designated Teacher

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will have strategic overview of CLA, and PLAC at Weatherhead High School, and will work closely with the staff with responsibility for each Key Stage and the designated support worker.

With support from the CLA Team, as detailed above, the Designated Teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving CLA and PLAC.
- Promote the educational achievement of every CLA and PLAC child on roll by:
 - Working with VSHs (Virtual School Heads).
 - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect CLA and PLAC learn and achieve.
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of CLA and PLAC.
- Promote a culture in which CLA and PLAC are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities.
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with CLA and PLAC.
- Work directly with CLA and PLAC 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 CLA and PLAC are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Involve parents and guardians of PLAC in decisions affecting their child's education.

5.2 Supporting CLA

The Designated Teacher, with support from the CLA Team will:

- Make sure CLA 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 CLA 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.
- Ensure that:
 - A CLA 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, where possible.
- Transfer a CLA 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 CLA and PLAC

The Designated Teacher, with support from the CLA Team will:

- Ensure the specific needs of CLA and PLAC are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses Pupil Premium funding.

- Work with VSHs to agree how Pupil Premium funding for CLA can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of PLAC 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 PLAC.
- 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 CLA and PLAC in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning.
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of CLA and PLAC, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this.
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to CLA, is followed.
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a CLA child may have.
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in CLA and PLAC, 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 CLA and PLAC and understand where the school can draw on specialist services.
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for CLA children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs.
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of PLAC children.

5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The Designated Teacher, with support from the CLA Team will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of CLA and PLAC.
- 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 PLAC 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 CLA, 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 CLA 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 CLA 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 PLAC, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians.
- Make sure that for each CLA:
 - 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 CLA 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 PLAC child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher, Behaviour and Attitudes. At every review, it will be approved by the full Governing Body.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Suspensions & Exclusions Policy