Rutlish School



RR6
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Designated Teacher Policy

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (LAC)

Committee ownership for this policy: F&P, Curr, Incl, Prem, RR6, FGB	Inclusion
Must be approved by FGB: Y / N	Y
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Responsible	Assistant Headteacher
This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of next review in order to reflect changes in legislation, where appropriate.	

Contents

1 Aims 3
2 Legislation and statutory guidance 3
3 Definitions 3
4 Designated teacher 3
5 Role of the designated teacher 4
5.1 Leadership Responsibilities 4
5.2 Supporting looked after children and previously looked after children 4
5.3 Relationships beyond school 4
5.4 Training 5
6 Other roles and responsibilities 5
6.1 Head of Year 5
6.2 SENDCO 5
6.3 Monitoring 5
APPENDIX 1 7
Glossary 7

1 Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- An appropriately qualified teacher is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. If not the same staff member, the Designated Teacher will work alongside the DSL to ensure that the needs of children who have or have previously had a social worker are understood and appropriate support is considered.
- 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

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 20 and section 20A of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008 alongside the following:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children Act 1989
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE Statutory Guidance)
- Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker and Kinship Children guidance (where relevant)

The policy is also aligned to Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK

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

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 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 previously looked-after children.

4 Designated teacher

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school. This is your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Designated Teacher: Ms Doherty (Designated Safeguarding Lead);

Designated Governor responsible for Looked After Children: Mr Mills and Mrs Jackson.
Contact details are: Telephone 020 8542 1212 or email administration@rutlish.merton.sch.uk.

5 Role of the designated teacher

5.1 Leadership Responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure that the educational achievement of each looked after and previously looked after child looked after on roll is monitored, tracked and promoted and wherever possible, accelerated.
- To ensure that there is an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP) with SMART targets that will promote progress.
- To advise on most effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus during the Personal Education Planning meeting.
- To ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus funding and additional budget share funding (where relevant) is used to support the learning objectives for the student and to be accountable for how the funding is spent with outcomes evidenced.
- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by looked after children and previously looked after children, and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs looked after and previously looked after children and to promote the involvement of these children in homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, student voice, student leadership etc.
- To ensure that members of staff who teach the looked after and previously looked after children on roll provide accurate progress data and advice on specific learning targets to inform the Personal Educational Planning meeting.
- To act as an advocate for looked after and previously looked children.
- To track and support the educational progress of all children who are looked after and previously looked after in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene quickly if there is evidence of individual underachievement by use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding to accelerate progress;
- To intervene if there is evidence of absence from school or internal truancy;
- To inform the planning and where relevant, transition for looked after and previously looked after children post 16;
- To ensure that the educational targets within the PEP are implemented fully, reviewed regularly and that all relevant school staff are aware of them;
- To report to the Governing Body an annual report and termly on the outcomes for looked after and previously looked after children.
- To ensure that emotional wellbeing, mental health and trauma-informed approaches are considered when planning support for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- To support the Quality Assurance Process for PEPs and for schools on the implementation of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher working with Looked After Children.
- Where safeguarding concerns arise regarding a looked-after or previously looked-after child, the Designated Teacher will work closely with the DSL to ensure timely safeguarding action, information sharing and appropriate multi-agency intervention.

5.2 Supporting looked after children and previously looked after children

- To discuss with individual children, possibly alongside a carer, to arrive at a statement about their care arrangements and circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or students.
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their PEP.
- To monitor the smooth transition of a new looked after and previously looked after child into the school.
- To develop in-school strategies to track and promote the achievement of looked after and previously looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers.
- To fully support additional learning opportunities that may be available from the Virtual School and partner agencies.
- To refer to early help when appropriate and be responsible for: identifying emerging needs; facilitating referrals; supporting early help assessments and contributing to Team Around the Child processes.

5.3 Relationships beyond school

- 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 and if 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/carers 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 SEND 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/carers.
- 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 parental responsibility.
- 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 where appropriate.
  - 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/carers and seek advice from the VSH.

5.4 Training

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.
- To attend the regular Designated Teachers conference and participate in area cluster groups for additional training and to share good practice.
- To develop knowledge of procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority the Virtual School.

6 Other roles and responsibilities

6.1 Head of Year

- Liaise with the Designated teacher on issues relating to LAC in their year group
- Ensure that relevant information is presented at PEP meetings
- Liaise with relevant carers, informing them of school issues, and providing opportunities for them to discuss educational progress

6.2 SENDCO

- Liaise with the Designated teacher and LAC teacher relating to issues of LAC on the SEND register/Code of Practice.
- Liaise with the Local Authority SENDIS team regarding LAC students who have EHCPs.
- Liaise with relevant carers and advise them of strategies that can support educational needs of the children in their care who are on the SEND register/Code of Practice.

6.3 Monitoring

The SLT will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis using the report from the Designated Teacher as source information:

- The number of LAC and PLAC students in the school;
- A comparison of attainment and progress measures as a discrete group, compared with those of other students in school and nationally;
- The attendance, suspensions, enrichment participation of students as a discrete group, compared to other students in the school.
- Student destinations after leaving the school.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that looked-after students have equal access to:

- Full time educational provision;

- Public examinations;
- Additional interventions to support educational progress
- Careers guidance;
- Extracurricular activities
- Pupil Premium Plus funding to raise to raise attainment

7 Confidentiality

The Designated teacher or DSL have responsibility for informing all appropriate members of staff who are in contact with the child or young person of their care status. In each case, the Designated teacher or DSL will determine the extent of the information shared. In every case, only information that is critical to an effective working relationship will be passed on. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding duties, UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 requirements.

APPENDIX 1

Glossary

Care Plan:	Every child in care should have a care plan which will include details of their needs and how these will be met, and contain information about their placement and the longer-term planning for their care.
Child Arrangement Order:	An order granted by the court which gives the holder parental responsibility for a child, although they share this with anyone else who has parental responsibility.
Children's Social Worker:	A social worker who is provided by the responsible authority to work with a child and to plan for their care. They are also responsible for meeting with the child to ensure that their needs are being met.
Children in Care:	Children in care are subject to a care order, an emergency protection order or are compulsorily accommodated.
CIN:	Abbreviation used for Child in Need. A child will be *in need* if they are disabled, or they are assessed by children's Services to be *in need* of extra support for their safety, health and/or development. If a child is assessed as a child *in need,* Children's Services may provide the child and other people in the family, with extra help to look after the child, but it is not an absolute requirement.
Delegated authority:	This is where the responsibility for making day to day decisions about a child has been delegated to the Foster Carer. This can include decisions on health, education, leisure (including permission slips for school trips and activities)
Designated Teacher (DT):	The DT is responsible for prompting the educational achievement of LAC in their school. The DT has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand how LAC can learn and achieve.
Family and friends carer:	When a child is living full time with someone who is a family member, friend or was previously known to them. The majority of family and friends care is made up of informal arrangements between parents and relatives, but there are other situations and sometimes legal orders too. Where the child is looked after by a Local Authority and the family and friends carer is approved as the Foster Carer, this is known as family and friends foster care.
Family and friends foster care:	Where a child was previously known to their Foster Carer and their Foster carer was approved to look after them, this is known as family and friends foster care. More comprehensive guidance on family and friends foster care in England is given in Family and Friends Care: statutory guidance for local authorities.
Foster care agreement:	An agreement between the fostering service and the Foster Carer which sets out matters such as terms of approval, the obligations of the Foster Carer, and what training and support the fostering service will provide for them. More information on what should be included in the Foster Care Agreement can be found In Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.
Independent Fostering Provider (IFP):	An IFP is an organisation that places children into foster placements on behalf of the Local Authority. Some are profit making companies while other are charities or not for profit companies. A listing of IFP's that are members of the Fostering Network is available on Find a Fostering service.
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO):	The IRO is a social worker who is responsible for the review of children looked cases. They chair the review for each individual child and monitor implementation of the care plan, as well as ensuring that the child's voice is heard and that their wishes are taken into account. You can find out more about the work of the IRO on the Department for Education's website.
Looked after child (LAC) or Child Looked After (LAC):	Anyone under age 18 who is looked after by the Local Authority, either because they are on a care order or they are accommodated through a voluntary agreement with their parents.
Parental responsibility:	All the rights, duties, responsibilities and powers which the law gives a parent in relation to their child. Mothers automatically have parental responsibility as do fathers if married to the mother when or after the child was born or by other legal agreements. Parental responsibility can also be given by the courts to others under orders such as special guardianship or adoption.

Pathway plan:	The pathway plan is completed as part of the leaving care process for each young person and includes any actions that have to be carried out by the responsible authority, Foster Carer, the young person themselves and any others involved.
Personal Education Plan (PEP):	The PEP is part of the child's care plan and gives information about the arrangements that have been made for their educational and/or training needs by the responsible authority.
Placement Plan:	The placement plan forms part of the child's overall care plan and lays out how the placement will meet the particular child's needs.
Private fostering:	An arrangement whereby a parent arranges for their child under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled) to live with someone who is not a relative for more than 28 days. Private fostering arrangements must be notified to the Local Authority, who will visit periodically to ensure the welfare of the child. This is not the same as being a foster carer for a LAC, as the LA has not assessed the child as needing to be looked after.
Short breaks:	These are a series of placements made for a limited amount of time where the child then returns to their parents. These children are not necessarily LAC, but might be.
Special Guardianship:	When the court makes a Special Guardianship order it gives parental responsibility to the special guardian, which they share with anyone else who has this. The order lasts until the child is 18, unless the court discharges it earlier.
Usual fostering limit:	Under the Children Act 1989 Schedule 7, the numbered of children fostered by a Foster Carer is limited (the usual fostering limit). The current usual fostering limit is three children unless the children are all siblings although exemptions can be granted. More information about the usual fostering limit and its exemptions can be found in section 5 of The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services.