



Designated Teacher Policy

Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After (PLAC) Guidance

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1. Introduction

At Vermont School, we are committed to supporting the academic progress, emotional wellbeing, and holistic development of all pupils, particularly those who are looked-after (LAC) or previously looked-after (PLAC). We recognise the significant challenges these children may face and the need for a coordinated, sensitive, and informed approach to help them thrive.

2. Aims

LAC and PLAC often experience disruption, loss, trauma, and complex social and emotional needs, which can have a profound impact on their education and development. As a Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) primary school, we are uniquely positioned to provide a safe, nurturing, and trauma-informed environment where these children can build trusting relationships, develop resilience, and access high-quality learning opportunities tailored to their individual needs.

This policy sets out how our school supports both LAC and PLAC, with a particular focus on ensuring that:

- A suitably trained and experienced member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC pupils.
- The Designated Teacher takes a lead role in promoting the educational achievement, emotional wellbeing, and inclusion of these children, and supports other staff to do the same.
- All staff, parents, carers, and guardians are aware of the identity and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher and know how to contact them for support or advice.

We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to succeed and feel valued. Through a whole-school approach underpinned by compassion, consistency, and high

expectations, we aim to remove barriers to learning and ensure our looked-after and previously looked-after pupils have the same chances to flourish as their peers.

3. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is informed by and aligned with key legislation and statutory guidance that sets out the responsibilities of schools in supporting LAC and PLAC.

In particular, it is based on the **Department for Education's statutory guidance: The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (2018)**, which outlines the duties of schools to promote the educational achievement of these pupils and the essential role of the Designated Teacher.

It also takes into account the provisions set out in the **Children and Young Persons Act 2008**, specifically:

- **Section 20** – which places a legal duty on governing bodies to designate a member of staff as the Designated Teacher for looked-after children. This teacher must undertake specific responsibilities to promote their educational achievement.
- **Section 20A** – which extends this duty to include previously looked-after children who are no longer in care due to adoption, a special guardianship order (SGO), or a child arrangements order (CAO).

In addition, this policy has regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- **Children Act 1989 and 2004** – setting out local authority responsibilities for children in care and their welfare.
- **The Education Act 2002 and 2011** – relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education.
- **Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE, 2018)** – guidance for local authorities and schools in working together to improve outcomes.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)** – which outlines the responsibilities of all agencies in keeping children safe.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)** – which includes statutory safeguarding guidance that applies to all pupils, including those who are looked-after or previously looked-after.

Our approach also reflects the principles of:

- **The Equality Act 2010**, ensuring looked-after and previously looked-after children are not discriminated against and have access to the same high-quality provision as their peers.
- **The SEND Code of Practice (2015)**, recognising that many LAC/PLAC pupils may have special educational needs or disabilities and must receive appropriate support.

Together, these legal frameworks guide our school's policy and practice to ensure we fulfil both our moral and statutory duties to some of the most vulnerable children in our care.

4. Definitions

To ensure a shared understanding and consistent support for looked-after and previously looked-after children, this section outlines the definitions of these terms and the responsibilities of key individuals involved in their care and education.

Looked-After Children (LAC)

Looked-after children are registered pupils who are:

- In the care of a local authority, either through a care order or on a voluntary basis (under section 20 of the Children Act 1989), 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.

These children may be placed in foster care, residential children's homes, or with extended family members under the supervision of the local authority.

Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils who were formerly in the care of a local authority in England or Wales, but have since left care through one of the following legal orders:

- **Adoption Order** – giving full parental responsibility to the adoptive parents.
- **Special Guardianship Order (SGO)** – placing the child with a special guardian who assumes long-term legal responsibility.
- **Child Arrangements Order (CAO)** – outlining with whom the child is to live and the contact arrangements with others.

Additionally, a pupil may also be considered previously looked-after if they:

- Appear to the governing body to have been in state care outside of England and Wales because they would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, **and**
- Ceased to be in that care as a result of being adopted.

These children may no longer be under the care of the local authority, but they may still face similar social, emotional, or educational challenges that require continued understanding and support.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is a statutory component of the looked-after child's care plan. It is developed collaboratively by the school, the social worker, carers, and other professionals, and should always reflect the child's voice. The PEP sets out:

- The child's current attainment and progress.
- Targets for development and strategies for support.
- Identified strengths, interests, and barriers to learning.
- Who is responsible for each action, and when it will be reviewed.

At our school, the Designated Teacher takes a lead role in contributing to and reviewing each child's PEP, ensuring it is clear, ambitious, and tailored to the child's SEMH needs.

Virtual School Head (VSH)

The **Virtual School Head (VSH)** is a senior officer within the local authority who has overall responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children in their area. Their role includes:

- Monitoring the progress of LAC across all schools.
- Supporting schools to deliver effective interventions and remove barriers to learning.
- Ensuring that PEPs are completed, reviewed, and meet quality standards.
- Providing guidance, challenge, and support to designated teachers.

The VSH is also required to offer **advice and information** to schools, parents, carers, and guardians regarding the education of previously looked-after children.

At Vermont School, the Designated Teacher works closely with the VSH and ensures that their guidance is embedded in our whole-school approach to supporting LAC and PLAC pupils.

5. Identity of the Designated Teacher

At Vermont School, our **Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children** is:

Mrs Kelly Moss

SEND Support Consultant

 **Telephone:** 023 8076 7988

 **Email:** info@vermontschool.co.uk

6. Role of the Designated Teacher

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 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.