The Aylesbury Vale Academy

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RESPECT | ASPIRATION | RESILIENCE

Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children Policy	
Policy Reference:	AVA. 047
Description:	This document provides a framework to show how the academy trust fulfils the statutory requirements for a designated teacher
Status:	Statutory Policy
Policy Audience:	Staff, Governors, Contractors
Academy Trust Contact:	Academy Principal
Other Related Policies and Procedures:	Behaviour Policy, Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, SEN Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
Governor Committees:	Governing Body
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1. Aims

The academy 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
- The academy works in partnership with the relevant Virtual School Head (VSH), local authority, social workers, parents and carers to promote educational achievement, attendance, wellbeing and stability for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (2018) and Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children (2018).

It has regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- the Children Act 1989
- the Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- section 2E of the Academies Act 2010
- the Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

- current statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion.

The academy will also have regard to current Department for Education guidance relating to the extended role of Virtual School Heads, including support for children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements.

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 (PLAC) children 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 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 academy. 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 looked-after children and providing information and advice in relation to previously looked-after children. The role also extends to promoting improved educational outcomes for children with a social worker, including those who have previously had a social worker, and children in kinship care arrangements, in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education guidance.

4. Identity of our designated teacher

The Academy has three Designated Teachers. These are:

Emma Kitter (Assistant Principal DSL)

Catherine Floyd (Assistant Principal DSL)

Louise Granville (Assistant Principal)

You can contact them by email on safeguarding@theacademy.me or by calling 01296 428551.

Our designated teachers take lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our academy. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

5. Role of the designated teacher

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the academy 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 academy staff understand:
  - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
  - How the whole academy supports the educational achievement of these students
- 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 academy 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 academy'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
- Ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of looked-after and previously looked-after children are taken into account when decisions are made about their education and support, having regard to their age and understanding.

5.2 Supporting looked-after children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure that the child's voice is reflected within the development and review of their PEP, and that their views about their education, aspirations and support needs are considered.
- 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 academy 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

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

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 academy uses "Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding, where applicable"
- Work with VSHs to agree how PP+ 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 PP+ funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how PP+ funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how PP+ 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 academy 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

5.4 Relationships beyond the academy

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the academy to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Discuss with social workers how the academy should engage with birth parents, and ensure the academy 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 academy works with others outside of the academy 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 academy works in partnership with the child’s carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
- Academy 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 suspension or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will work with the headteacher and contact the VSH as early as possible so that appropriate support and intervention can be considered. The academy will consider the child's circumstances, including safeguarding, SEND, mental health and other relevant factors, and work with the VSH, social worker, carers and other professionals as appropriate to identify support and seek to maintain educational stability.
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will work with the child's parents or guardians and, with their agreement where appropriate, seek advice from the VSH about strategies and support that may help prevent exclusion.

6. Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that a suitably qualified and experienced member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Ensure that the designated teacher has appropriate seniority, professional development and opportunities to carry out their responsibilities effectively
- Ensure that academy policies and practices support the educational achievement, wellbeing and inclusion of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Receive appropriate information about the progress and attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children while maintaining individual pupils' confidentiality
- Ensure that the academy works effectively with the relevant Virtual School Head, local authorities and other agencies
- Monitor the effectiveness of provision for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

7. Further Information

This policy should be read alongside the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Department for Education
- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, Department for Education, 2018
- Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children, Department for Education, 2018
- Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: Virtual School Head role extension, Department for Education

- Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, Department for Education, July 2026
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

8. Monitoring arrangements

The Governing Body is responsible for reviewing this policy annually and following any significant changes to legislation or statutory guidance, and for ensuring that the academy fulfils its responsibilities towards looked-after and previously looked-after children.