



Designated Teacher Policy (cared-for and previously cared-for children)

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: July 2024
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Aims

The school will ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for cared-for and previously cared-for children.
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of cared-for and previously cared-for children, and supports other staff members to do this too.
- Staff, parents, carers and other partners are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

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.

Definitions

Cared-for children are registered pupils that are:

- In the care of a local authority i.e. a child 'cared-for by a local authority' is one who cared-for within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;

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 cared-for children are registered pupils that fall into either of these categories:

- They were cared-for 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

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a cared-for 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 cared-for 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.

Our school works with Virtual Schools across the country.

Our local Virtual School Teacher is: Mrs Debbie Gaywood

Dave Richardson - Primary Teacher for Cared For Children (david.richardson@torbay.gov.uk)

Our designated teacher **Mrs Debbie Gaywood** takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of cared-for and previously cared-for children at our school. She is our initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

The Designated teacher works closely with the Provision team, SENDco and class teachers to ensure that we best support the needs of the CFC/ PCFC students in our care. In order to centralise meeting bookings and ensure appropriate cover for attendees we also have a small amount of admin support provided for the designated teacher.

Role of the designated teacher

The responsibilities of a Designated Teacher are outlined in the [DfE's statutory guidance](#).

The designated teacher has lead responsibility but individual tasks may be appropriately delegated.

Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving cared-for and previously cared- for children
- Promote the educational achievement of every cared- for and previously cared- for child on roll
- Work with social workers and other social care professionals and the Virtual School to promote the educational achievement of every cared- for and previously cared- for child on roll
- Work with other services to ensure effective assessment and support for cared- for and previously cared- for children requiring additional support
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how cared- for and previously cared- for children learn and achieve
 - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of cared- for and previously cared- for children
- Promote a culture in which cared- for and previously cared- for 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 cared- for and previously cared- for children
- Work directly with cared- for and previously cared- for 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 cared- for children's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding cared- for and previously cared- for children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work closely with the SENCO to ensure that special educational needs are identified and appropriate support is put in place
- Involve parents and guardians of previously cared- for children and parents of cared- for children as agreed with social workers, in decisions affecting their child's education

Supporting cared- for children

The designated teacher will:

- Make sure cared- for 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 and deciding, with partners, what provisions will best meet needs
- Monitor and track the progress of cared- for children and review as part of the PEP
- If a child is not on track to meet their targets, plan intervention as part of the PEP
- Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place

Ensure that:

- A cared- for child's PEP is reviewed at least three times a year and kept up to date so that it informs review of their care plan
- PEPs are effectively completed so that they give clear information about a child's strengths and difficulties and give a clear plan for how needs will be met.
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a cared- for child may have
- The PEP process is used to agree how pupil premium funding for cared- for children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VS representative within 2 weeks of the PEP meeting.
- PEPs are transferred to a child's next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for caring for the child has the most recent version

Supporting both cared- for children and previously cared- for children

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of cared- for and previously cared- for children are understood by relevant staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding
- Work with parents of previously cared- for children to provide support for these children
- Work together with parents and others to decide on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously cared- for children
- Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of cared- for and previously cared- for children and how these impact on all areas of school life e.g. behaviour, attendance, homework and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of cared- for and previously cared- for children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this and that liaise effectively with SENCos and other specialist staff e.g. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing coordinators.
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to cared- for children and previously cared- for children, is followed
- Ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in cared- for and previously cared- for children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of cared- for and previously cared- for children e.g. formal assessment Thrive, Boxall, SDQ alongside more informal information gathering

Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other care professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of cared- for and previously cared- for children
- Work with local authority and external services to respond effectively to the needs of cared- for and previously cared- for 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 cared- for children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for cared- for 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 cared- for 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 cared- for 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 cared- for children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each cared- for 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 cared- for child is at risk of exclusion:
 - Contact the Virtual School as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to avoid exclusion becoming necessary
 - Work with the Virtual School and child's carers, to consider what support/ strategies need to be put in place to support more positive behaviour

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Lead and the Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.