



De La Salle School

DESIGNATED TEACHER POLICY (LOOKED-AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED- AFTER CHILDREN)

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| Responsible Governors' Committee | Behaviour and Welfare |
| Responsible Person | A De'Ath |
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| May 2024 | Update to the name of the Virtual School headteacher |
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DE LA SALLE SCHOOL DESIGNATED TEACHER POLICY

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1. Aims

The school 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

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.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children 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 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
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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 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.

New Duties (See Appendix 1)

The Government's Children in Need review recognised the crucial role that Virtual School Heads have in helping education settings and local authorities work together, and made a commitment to explore the capacity needed to extend their leadership to the cohort of children and young people with a social worker.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected all children and for many of the most vulnerable has increased barriers to education. It is essential that the *cohort of children with a social worker are supported to recover from the pandemic*.

From September 2021, local authorities received funding to resource Virtual School Heads to work with early years settings, schools, colleges and social care leaders to create a culture of high aspirations that helps all children with social workers to make educational progress. With the knowledge and expertise gained from their work promoting the educational outcomes of looked-after and previously looked-after children, Virtual School Heads enhance the partnerships between education settings and local authorities. Virtual School Heads work with schools and the designated teacher to further understand and address the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience. The Virtual School Head will help to demonstrate the benefits of attending an education setting, as well as ensuring there are mechanisms in place to offer advice and support to teachers and social workers, with the aim of narrowing the attainment gap.

4. Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is Anna De'Ath, Assistant Headteacher

You can contact her at deatha@delasalleschool.org.uk

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Our link Governor is Cllr T Sims (teresasims2017@outlook.com)

De La Salle works closely with the St Helens Virtual School. The Headteacher is Heather Addison (heatheraddison@sthelens.gov.uk) who is responsible for monitoring previously looked after children, previously looked after children and children with a social worker.

5. Role of the designated teacher

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children and children with social workers.
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after, previously looked-after child and children with social workers 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 school staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with social workers 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 looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with social workers
- Promote a culture in which looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with social workers are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker.
- Work directly with looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker 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 team, as AD is DSL, to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

5.2 Supporting looked-after children

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

5.3 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children and children with a social worker

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and children with a social worker are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium 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 pupil premium funding and other support for these children
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- 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 looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker 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, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker, 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, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker, and understand where the school 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 looked after children, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker

5.4 Relationships beyond the school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker
- 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 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 school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, previously looked after children and children with a social worker 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 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 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 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 previously looked-after child or a child with a social worker is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion
 - There is also support with transition between school in the admissions code whereby looked after and previously looked after children have priority (criteria 1) when moving phases in education.

6. Monitoring and Support arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by A. De' Ath. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

De La Salle prides itself on being a truly inclusive school. Our Lasallian standards demand that we do everything we can to include and encourage ALL students with a focus on pupil premium and SEND students. We have all had training from the Ed. Psychologists on attachment and trauma theory.

The key methods of supporting students who are LAC or PLAC and children with a social worker include:

- Appointment of two academic and pastoral mentors to specifically support students who are, or have previously been, looked after or have an assigned social worker

- Close work with Liverpool University to engage all of our students who are, or have previously been, looked after with the Widening Engagement scheme and summer school.
- Participation and subscription to Letterbox Books Scheme
- Regular e-PEP meetings (termly) and LAC reviews
- Day-today monitoring and mentoring
- Identification of a key worker
- Provision of tuition for catch-up
- Provision of IT equipment
- Bus passes
- Subsidy (sometimes total) for educational visits such as the WWI battlefields or Auschwitz as well as visits with more opportunities for socialisation and building attachments with peers, such as the PGL trip.
- Homework club transportation
- Breakfast Club
- YPDAAT
- YOT
- CAMHS
- Listening Ear
- Together for Adoption
- Triple P parenting courses
- School Resilience Team
- School Mental Health Team
- School nurse service
- SDQs
- In-house mentoring (MrsTucker, Wellbeing and Medical Officer, Denise Pye, PSMs)
- Cool-off space in the Lasallian Achievement and Progress room (LAP)
- Reasonable adjustments of sanctions
- Promotion of rewards
- Membership of outside groups such as Stagecoach Drama School and Make It Count for Sport
- Support from Local Authority's SGO team
- Education Psychology Service
- Virtual School

School will work closely with social workers and IROs to provide anything appropriate with pupil premium plus funding.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding

- Exclusions
- SEN
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- Admissions Code
- Pupil Premium Policy