

CHANCERY EDUCATION TRUST

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN LOOKED-AFTER & PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER POLICY

MARCH 2026

Next Review Date: March 2027

Staff should make themselves aware of all policies and amendments or updates to policies and adhere to the same, which will be made available on relevant websites and internal data and computer systems.

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Executive Summary for the Designated Teacher for Children Looked-After & Previously Looked-After Policy March 2026

1. Purpose of the Policy

The policy ensures that:

- A Designated Teacher is appointed in each school.
- They lead on improving the educational outcomes of CLA and previously looked-after children (PLAC).
- All stakeholders (staff, parents, carers) know who the designated teacher is and their role.

2. Legal Framework

The policy is based on:

- DfE statutory guidance for designated teachers.
- Academies Act 2010 (Section 2E).
- Trust governance and funding requirements.

3. Key Definitions

- **Children Looked-After (CLA):** In local authority care or accommodated for over 24 hours.
- **Previously Looked-After (PLAC):** Left care through adoption, special guardianship, child arrangements order, or equivalent overseas care.
- **PEP (Personal Education Plan):** Key document setting targets, support and responsibilities.
- **Virtual School Head (VSH):** Oversees and supports education of CLA and advises on PLAC.

4. Designated Teachers

Each academy has a named designated teacher who:

- Takes lead responsibility for CLA and PLAC pupils.
- Acts as the main point of contact for all related matters.

5. Core Responsibilities

The designated teacher:

- Promotes achievement, progress and wellbeing.
- Uses Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding effectively.
- Works closely with:
 - DSL/DDSL
 - VSH

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- Social workers and carers
- Reports termly to governors on outcomes.

6. Leadership Role

They must:

- Be the central contact in school.
- Promote a whole-school approach prioritising CLA/PLAC.
- Ensure staff understand:
 - Barriers to learning (e.g. trauma, instability)
 - How to support these pupils
- Influence school policies to reflect their needs.
- Build strong relationships with families and carers.

7. Supporting Children Looked-After (CLA)

Key duties:

- Lead on PEPs (planning, reviewing, updating).
- Set and monitor targets and progress.
- Intervene when progress is not on track.
- Ensure:
 - PEPs are reviewed before care plan reviews
 - Information is shared with social workers and VSH
- Support smooth transitions between schools.

8. Supporting CLA & Previously Looked-After Pupils

The designated teacher ensures:

- Staff understand educational, emotional and behavioural needs.
- Effective use of PP+ funding.
- Awareness of:
 - SEND needs
 - Mental health needs
- Alignment between:
 - PEPs and EHCPs
- Use of tools like SDQs to assess wellbeing.

9. Working with External Agencies

The designated teacher:

- Works closely with:
 - Social workers
 - VSH
 - Local authority services

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- Supports education stability, especially during care or placement changes.
- Ensures appropriate information sharing and safeguarding.
- Helps prevent exclusions, involving VSH early where needed.

10. Linked Policies

This policy connects with:

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- SEND
- Exclusion
- Medical needs
- Accessibility planning

11. Monitoring & Review

- Reviewed annually
- Next review due March 2027

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1. Aims

The Academy School aims to ensure that:

- › A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for children looked-after and previously looked-after
- › The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of children looked-after and previously looked-after, 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 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Children Looked-after (CLA) 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

Children Previously Looked-after 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

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- › 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 CLA's care plan that is developed between the Academy School and the Local Authority, usually a designated social worker. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential. It also includes the child's views.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's CLAs, 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 children previously looked-after.

4. Identity of our designated teacher

Our designated teacher is:

Mrs P Stephenson, *Darrick Wood Infant & Nursery School*
 Mrs K Aidoo, *John Wood School & Nursery*
 Mrs S Burdett, *Oaklands Primary Academy*
 Mrs H Hewitt, *Pickhurst Academy*

You can contact them as follows:

Darrick Wood Infant & Nursery School:
admin@darrickwood.cetrust.com / 01689 857278

John Wood School & Nursery:
office@johnwood.cetrust.com / 020 8654 1460

Oaklands Primary Academy:
admin@oaklands.cetrust.com / 01959 573963

Pickhurst Academy:
office@pickhurst.cetrust.com / 020 8462 5867

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

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5. Role of the designated teacher

- › The designated teacher will make use of the PP+ funding to provide additional support or extra-curricular activities for the child in line with the PEP recommendations.
- › The designated teacher will regularly liaise with the DSL and DDSL's about the children.
- › The designated teacher will report termly, to governors, on the progress, attainment and support for CLAs.

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- › Act as a central point of initial contact within the Academy School for any matters involving children looked-after and previously looked-after
- › Promote the educational achievement of every child looked-after and previously looked-after on roll by:
 - Working with VSHs
 - Promoting a whole Academy School culture where the needs of these pupils matter and are prioritised
- › Take lead responsibility for ensuring Academy School staff understand:
 - The things which can affect how children looked-after and previously looked-after learn and achieve
 - How the whole Academy School supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- › Contribute to the development and review of whole Academy School policies to ensure they consider the needs of children looked-after and previously looked-after
- › Promote a culture in which children looked-after and previously looked-after are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other Academy School activities
- › Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with children looked-after and previously looked-after
- › Work directly with children looked-after and previously looked-after 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 CLA's PEPs
- › Work closely with the Academy School's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children looked-after and previously looked-after are quickly and effectively responded to
- › Involve parents and guardians of children previously looked-after in decisions affecting their child's education

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5.2 Supporting children looked-after (CLA)

The designated teacher will:

- › Make sure CLA'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 CLA'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 School and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils
- › Ensure that:
 - A CLA'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 CLA'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

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

The designated teacher will:

- › Ensure the specific needs of children looked-after and previously looked-after are understood by staff and reflected in how the Academy School uses pupil premium + funding
- › Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium + funding for children looked-after can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- › Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of children previously looked-after 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 children previously looked-after
- › Ensure teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of children looked-after and previously looked-after in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- › Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of children looked-after and previously looked-after, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- › Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to children looked-after, is followed
- › Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a child looked-after may have
- › Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in children looked-after and previously looked-after, 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 children looked-after and previously looked-after and understand where the Academy School can draw on specialist services
- › Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for children looked-after, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- › Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of children previously looked-after

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5.4 Relationships beyond the Academy School

The designated teacher will:

- › Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the Academy School to respond effectively to the needs of children looked-after and previously looked-after
- › Discuss with social workers how the Academy School should engage with birth parents, and ensure the Academy 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 children previously looked-after 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 School works with others outside of the Academy School to maximise the stability of education for children looked-after, 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 children looked-after 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 child looked-after 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 children previously looked-after, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- › Make sure that for each child looked-after:
 - There's an agreed process for how the Academy 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
 - Academy 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 child looked-after is at risk of exclusion:

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- Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the Academy 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 child previously looked-after is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

6. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- › Behaviour
- › Child Protection & Safeguarding
- › Suspension & Permanent Exclusion
- › SEND
- › Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- › Accessibility Plan

Monitoring and Implementation Policy

The policy is reviewed annually, although the Trust may vary or amend it periodically to ensure that we fulfil our obligation around the Designated teacher for children looked-after & previously looked-after policy. All proposed changes to this policy would be made following the approval from the Committee.

	Name	Date
Policy written by	CET Board	March 2026
Review by Committee	CET Board	March 2026
Approved by Committee	CET Board	July 2026
Adopted by Governing Board	Local Governing Board	October 2026
To be reviewed annually		
Review by	March 2027	

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