

September 2023

## **Designated Teacher Policy [Looked after and previously looked after children]**



**SOUTHCHURCH  
HIGH SCHOOL**

The policy should be reviewed annually

	Date
This policy was created in:	March 2021
It was ratified by the Governing Body on:	22 March 2021
Updated due to change of personnel	September 2022
Update due to change of personnel	September 2023

## Contact details

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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 their responsibilities

## 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

**Looked-after children** are registered students 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 students 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 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 students 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.

## 4. Identity of our Designated Teacher

Our Designated Teacher is Miss Murray.

You can contact Miss Murray by email: [smurray@southchurchschool.com](mailto:smurray@southchurchschool.com)

Our Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our school.

Miss Tuite works closely with Miss Murray and is the initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below. She can be contacted by email: [ktuite@southchurchschool.com](mailto:ktuite@southchurchschool.com)

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 The Headteacher and Governing Body

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for all care-experienced children. We will ensure that the Designated Teacher for children in care has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority and sufficient time and experience to fulfil this statutory role.

A named governor will be nominated to link with the Designated Teacher and all governors will be fully aware of the statutory guidance for care-experienced children.

The Head Teacher and nominated governor will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all care-experienced children make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff have relevant skills, knowledge and understanding.

Regular communication between the Head Teacher and Governing Body and the Designated Teacher should include:

- The number of care-experienced children on roll
- Compliance and quality of individual children's Personal Education Plan (for Children in Care)
- The use and impact of the Pupil Premium Plus grant in raising educational outcomes
- Attendance and exclusion data (in comparison to children who are not care-experienced)
- Progress and attainment data (in comparison to children who are not care-experienced)
- Destinations for care-experienced children that leave Southchurch High School

## Role of the Designated Teacher

### 5.2 Leadership responsibilities

Miss Murray and Miss Tuite will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school 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 students matter and are prioritised
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
  - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
  - How the whole school 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 school 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
- Ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are responded to quickly and effectively
- Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

### 5.3 Supporting looked-after children

Miss Murray and Miss Tuite 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 students
- 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

### 5.4 Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children

Miss Murray and Miss Tuite will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children 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 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 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 previously looked-after children

## 5.5 Relationships beyond the school

Miss Murray and Miss Tuite will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after 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 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, 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 is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

## **6. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Miss Murray, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full local governing board.

## **7. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Child protection
- SEND
- Supporting students with medical needs