

Designated Teacher Policy

(Looked-After and previously Looked-After Children)

Status: **Statutory**

Staff responsible: **Principal**

Review date: **September 2021**

Next review date: **September 2022**

1. Aims

The UTC 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](#).

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 body 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 UTC. 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

At **UTC Sheffield OLP** our designated teacher is **Katie Wigham** who is the Assistant Principal.

You can contact her by e-mailing kwigham@utcsheffield.org.uk or calling 0114 260 3940.

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

5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

Act as a central point of initial contact within the UTC 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 UTC culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised

Take lead responsibility for ensuring UTC staff understand:

- The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
- How the whole UTC supports the educational achievement of these students.

Contribute to the development and review of whole UTC 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 UTC 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

As designated safeguarding lead they will 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.

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 UTC 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

5.3 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 UTC uses student premium funding

Work with VSHs to agree how student 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 student premium funding and other support for these children

Play a key part in decisions on how student premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children

Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how student 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 UTC can draw on specialist services

Put in place robust arrangements to use appropriate resources such as strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs), Boxall Profiling and use of PASS data 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 UTC

The designated teacher will:

Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the UTC to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children

Discuss with social workers how the UTC 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 UTC works with others outside of the UTC 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 UTC works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
- UTC 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.