

Woodside Academy



The role of the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children

Agreed by Governors: January 2025

1. Introduction

Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience needs careful assessment and considered planning to support their learning.

The statutory role of designated teacher for looked-after, and previously looked-after, children ensures that the educational achievements of these students are promoted and supported effectively.

2. Definitions

Looked-after children are pupils who:

- (i) are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (ii) are the subject of a care order or interim care order
- (iii) are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child

Previously looked-after children are pupils who are no longer looked after because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The designated teacher

In accordance with its statutory obligations, an appropriately qualified and experienced teacher has been appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after, and previously looked-after, children.

The designated teacher at Woodside Academy is Ms Jennifer Ryder.

The designated teacher will:

- be a central point of initial contact within the school to help make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning
- promote a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
- have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll
- will work in partnership with other school staff, the Local Authority Virtual Schools Head, foster carers, care workers, social workers and for previously looked after children, parents or guardians, in the best interests of the student.

The key responsibilities of the designated teacher are set out in Appendix A

Where there are high numbers of looked-after, and previously looked-after, children, an additional teacher may be designated.

Some functions may be delegated, but the designated teacher retains overall responsibility and accountability.

The Governing Body, headteacher and leadership team

- Will ensure that the designated teacher:
 - has appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
 - has appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership team and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and act as a champion for them
 - has training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including a good knowledge of SEND
 - contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve
 - has the resources to carry out their role
 - has access to expertise within and outside the school such as SENDCOs, health and mental health support
- Has arrangements in place to monitor and ensure that the role of the designated teacher is providing appropriate support for looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school roll

- Will ensure that school policies reflect, and are sensitive to, the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, particularly as identified in personal care plans and respect their wishes and feelings about their care status. In this respect the Governing Body will consider and monitor the effectiveness of policies for looked-after and previously looked-after children, particularly in relation to:
 - Admissions and transition
 - Progress
 - Attendance, behaviour and exclusions
 - Gifted and talented
 - Special educational needs
 - Mental health
 - Interventions and resources
 - Educational visits and extended school activities
 - Pupil Premium Plus

All staff

- Understand the key issues that affect the learning of looked-after and previously looked after children
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of looked-after and previously looked after children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all looked-after and previously looked-after children.

4. Reporting

The designated teacher will report to the Governing Body on a termly basis setting out

- The number of looked-after and previously looked -after children on the school's roll (if any).
- Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- Their Teacher Assessment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
- The destinations of pupils who leave the school.

The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

5. Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of looked-after, and previously looked-after, children in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition. It is vital that the looked-after, and previously looked-after, children are aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Appendix A – Key Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

Leadership

- Be the central point of contact within the school;
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll;
- Promote a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
- Ensure that arrangements are joined up within the school and with partners to minimise any disruption to the children's learning;
- Ensure school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils;
- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff, reflected in and accommodated by the school uses pupil premium funding.

Supporting children

- Ensure that:
 - there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
 - there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings);
 - there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
 - thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
 - transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively;
 - are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
 - looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
 - there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils:
 - Support children to:
 - discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
 - believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs;
 - discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner;

- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children and how to access further assessment and support where necessary.
- Take lead responsibility for the development and implementation of PEPs within school in partnership with others as necessary;
 - Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans
 - Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs
 - Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place
 - Identify what resources may be required to further support the child and from where these may be sourced
 - Lead further actions where a child is not on track to meet their targets
 - Review and update the PEP

Advising and supporting other staff

- Ensure school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Ensure school staff:
 - have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
 - 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
 - appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;
 - understand the role of social workers and VSHs and the importance of involving carers, parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education,
 - know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips

Partnership Working

- Determine 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
- Work with Virtual School Heads to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to

- 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
- Work directly with carers, parents and guardians to:
 - promote good home-school links;
 - support progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
 - ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy;
 - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.

Jen Ryder 2025