

# Designated Teacher for Children in Care and Previous Children in Care

The Sittingbourne School



**Approved by**

Lynn Lawrence

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## 1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for children in care and previous children in care
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of children in care and children in care previously, 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 20](#) and [section 20A](#) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. It also takes into account [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.

## 3. Definitions

Children in care 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

### Types of care:

- Living with foster parents/carers
- Living with friends or relatives, through kinship foster care
- Living in a residential children's home
- Living in residential settings like schools, secure units or semi-independent living accommodation.

Children in care previously 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

**Personal education plan (PEP)** is part of a CiC'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 children in care, 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, carers and guardians in respect of previous children in care.

#### **4. Identity of our designated teacher**

Our Senior Lead Designated teacher for Children in Care and previous children in care is Orla Wheeler, [orla.wheeler@swale.at](mailto:orla.wheeler@swale.at)

Our Designated Children in care and Previous Children in care Co-ordinator is Kimberley Parsloe, [kimberley.parsloe@swale.at](mailto:kimberley.parsloe@swale.at)

Our Senior Lead Designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting educational achievement and advises the Designated CiC Coordinator around curriculum, teaching and learning and outcomes.

#### **5. Role of the designated teacher**

##### 5.1 Leadership responsibilities

The designated Cic and Previously CiC co-ordinator will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children in care and previous children in care
- Promote the educational achievement of every child in care and previous children in care on roll by:
  - Working closely and seeking advice from the Senior Lead Designated teacher
  - Working with VSHs (Virtual School Head)
  - 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 children in care and children in care previously 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 children in care and children in care previously
- Promote a culture in which children in care and children in care previously are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with children in care and children in care previously
- Work directly with children in care and children in care previously and their parents, carers and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of CiC's PEPs
- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children in care and children in care previously are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents and guardians of previous CiC in decisions affecting their child's education

## **5.2 Supporting Children in Care**

The designated CiC and Previously CiC co-ordinator will:

- Make sure children in care'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 children in care'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 child in care'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 child in care'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 children in care and children in care previously**

The designated CiC and Previously CiC co-ordinator will:

- Ensure the specific needs of children in care and children in care previously are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium plus funding
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of children in care and children in care previously, and how to support them
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for children in care can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents, carers and guardians of children who were in care previously about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging them to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previous children in care. Encourage parents', carers' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus 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 children in care and children in care previously in areas such as attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning

- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of children in care and children in care previously, and make sure other staff also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to CiC, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a CiC may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in children in care and children in care previously, 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 in care and children in care previously and how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for children in care, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of children in care previously.

#### **5.4 Relationships beyond the school**

The designated CiC and Previously CiC co-ordinator will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of children in care and children in care previously
- 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, carers and guardians of children in care previously 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 children in care, 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 in care 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 in care 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 in care previously, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- Make sure that for each child in care:
  - 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 child in care 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 child who was in care previously is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents, carers or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

## 6. Virtual School

Virtual schools act as a champion to promote the progress and education attainment of children in care or children previously in care. It is an organisation that coordinates educational services at a strategic and operational level. The school does not exist in real terms, or as a building. Children do not attend it. Children in care remain the responsibility of the school where they are enrolled.

### **What does VSK do? (Virtual Schools Kent)**

- Influence policy and develop and improve services.
- Promote individual achievement and wellbeing.
- Provide advice, support and training to professionals, schools, colleges and institutions.
- Improve access to specialist services.
- Provide access to professional advice and guidance on education, training and employment.
- Provide additional opportunities for out of school learning and leisure.
- Facilitate access to early education and child care.

### **How are they organised?**

Virtual School Kent comprises a Headteacher, Deputy Heads, Assistant Heads, Fostering Education Liaison Officers, Education Support Officers, KS4 Progression Advisors, Post 16 Support Officers, Education Welfare Officer, Criminal Injuries Compensation Coordinator, Business Support Team, Virtual School Kent Advisory Team.

## **7. Personal Education Plans**

All CiC children must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. The PEP is a record of the child's education and forms part of the overall Care Plan for that child. It provides a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision to ensure academic progress. The social worker, parents, carers, school, VSK and the child may be invited to the PEP meeting to ensure the views of all stakeholders are considered. The school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Issues that may be discussed in the PEP:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses

- Include the child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective
- Interests, both in and out of school
- Developmental and educational and pastoral needs
- Future plans, and how these can be supported
- Issues arising for the child
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

The PEP should set clear objectives or targets which relate to academic achievement as well as out of school activities and wherever necessary behavioural targets. If a child moves school, the PEP should be forwarded, as a matter of urgency, to the new school when known. In relation to previously CiC, although they no longer required a PEP, the designated teachers should continue to consider their educational needs. The designated teachers should maintain links with VSHs who must make advice and information available, in order to promote the educational achievement of this group of previous CiC.

## **8. Post 16**

Post 16 students are supported by the Designated teacher as a key contact to support Children in Care and Care Leavers in Post16 education. Their role is to support young people, who may be thinking of joining them, through the application process and to ensure all support available is accessed. They will also provide support at transition into Post16 options. They should be your main point of contact at the College as well as the Sixth Form Principal.

Students between the age 16-19 can access the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. This bursary pays up to £1,200 per academic year if studying full time to support young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups (those who do not have access to parental support and those receiving certain benefits in their own right) in participating in education. It also enables institutions to make discretionary awards to those young people they assess as facing the greatest financial barriers to participation.

## **9. Funding**

CiC and previous CiC are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. The academy trust is committed to ensuring effective use of dedicated funding, where available, for all eligible Children in Care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

All Children in Care receive funding via Virtual Schools who receive it from the government. The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

### **10. Engagement with parents/carers**

We want to empower parents and carers by fostering a two-way street of communication. This can involve regular updates on curriculum and learning strategies that encourage questions and feedback. By offering workshops on relevant topics like online safety or childhood development, schools can equip parents with the tools to support their children's learning at home. Additionally, schools can bridge resource gaps by providing access to after-school programs or connecting families with community services. This collaborative approach strengthens the home-school connection, ultimately benefiting the child's academic and emotional well-being.

### **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Orla Wheeler. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

### **12. 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

All school policies can be viewed on the [schools website](#).