

# **Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy**

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## 1.0 Policy statement

Dixons Academies Trust is fully committed to supporting Children who are Looked After or are a have previously been a Looked After Child. Department for Education guidance makes it clear that all schools have a statutory duty to ensure that students who fall into the categories above are well supported to ensure they achieve their potential at school and, as an academy trust whose mission is to tackle social and educational disadvantaged, supporting the most vulnerable is at the core of why the organisation exists.

This policy links to our policies on:

- Anti-bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection Safeguarding
- Child Missing in Education
- Exclusion
- SEND

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children 2018
- Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children 2018
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2019
- Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009
- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

## 2.0 Scope and purpose

Statistically, children who are looked after or have previously been looked after are at increased risk of having poor academic outcomes or being excluded or suspended than their peers. With this policy as a starting point, Dixons' aim is to provide whole academy culture's based on high quality, high expectations, strong routines and strong relationships, in order to enable all students to thrive, whilst being proactive in recognising and supporting the needs of our most vulnerable, including those who are experiencing, or have experienced the care system.

- 2.1 To ensure all staff understand their role and responsibilities in relation to students who are looked after or previously looked after by the local authority.
- 2.2 To demonstrate our trust's commitment to procedures relating to students who are looked after or previously looked after by the local authority.
- 2.3 To facilitate our trust's commitment to ensuring all students receive their entitlement to a high quality education, appropriate to their individual needs and circumstances, and is able to achieve their full potential.
- 2.4 To highlight the importance of multi-agency work in order to best support vulnerable students.
- 2.5 To provide families, carers and other agencies with information on the duties and responsibilities of academies for students who are looked after or previously looked after by the local authority.

## 3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 A child is 'looked-after' if they are in the care of a local authority and / or provided with accommodation by a local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.
- 3.2 The terms and acronyms 'looked-after', Looked After Child (LAC), and Child who is Looked After (CLA) are used interchangeably, but 'child / student who is looked after' will be used in the remained of this document.
- 3.3 A child is 'previously looked-after' if they fall into any of these categories:
  - No longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an:
    - adoption;
    - special guardianship order (SGO);
    - child arrangements order (CAO);

- Were adopted from ‘state care’ outside of England and Wales, including care provided by:
    - a public authority;
    - a religious organisation;
    - any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society
- 3.4 The terms and acronyms Previously Looked After Child (PLAC) and Formerly Looked After Child (FLAC) are used interchangeably, but the former will be used in the remainder of this document.
- 3.5 A care leaver is a young person who is no longer looked after by the local authority due to their age, which can happen at the ages of 16, 17 or 18.
- 3.6 All schools must appoint a designated teacher for children who are looked after and previously looked after, who should work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of those groups of students. They are sometimes referred to as LAC or CLA Co-ordinators but will be referred to as the ‘designated teacher’ for the remainder of this document.
- 3.7 The personal education plan (PEP) is part of a child who is looked after’s care plan and is developed in collaboration 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.
- 3.8 The virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority’s children who are looked after, working across all schools to monitor and support these students as if they were in a single school; the virtual school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents relating to children who are looked after and those who were previously looked after.
- 3.9 Pupil Premium Plus (PPP or PP+) is funding managed by the virtual school head and designated for the purpose of meeting the needs of children who are looked after.

## 4.0 Barriers for a Child who is Looked After

- 4.1 The governing body will:
- ensure that the academy has appointed a designated teacher to oversee the education and support for all students who are looked after or were previously looked after
  - ensure that the designated teacher has appropriate seniority, professional experience, training and skills to perform the role
  - ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep students who are looked after or were previously looked after safe
  - monitor the experience and outcomes of students who are looked after or were previously looked after and provide challenge when needed
- 4.2 The principal and senior leadership team will:
- work closely with governors, the DSL and the designated teacher to determine the strategic development and whole academy approaches to ensuring the best experience and outcomes for students who are looked after or were previously looked after
  - have overall responsibility for students who are looked after or were previously looked after
- 4.3 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:
- work closely with the designated teacher to provide the best support and provision for students who are looked after or were previously looked after
  - have contact details for the social workers and VSHs of every student who is looked after and, where relevant, were previously looked after
  - have contact details for the personal advisor appointed to any student who is a care leaver
- 4.4 The designated teacher will:
- work with VSH and external agencies where needed to ensure students’ needs are met through contributing to, monitoring and reviewing the PEP within statutory timescales
  - ensure that academy staff understand the things which can affect how a child that is looked after or has previously been looked after learns and achieves, and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these students
  - promote a culture in which the child:
    - is able 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
    - is prioritised in any selection of students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support
    - is encouraged to participate in academy activities and in decision making within the school and the care system
  - liaise with curriculum staff to ensure that students who are looked after or were previously looked after are a priority for interventions and tailored lessons
  - ensure that there are positive and productive relationships with home which foster the development of the student



- work closely with the academy’s DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and effectively responded to
- fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child’s education, including any requests to the VSH for advice on meeting their individual needs

4.5 All staff will:

- have equally high expectations of all students, providing support and scaffolding for any student who needs it in order to meet those high expectations
- prioritise students who are looked after or were previously looked after in when planning support and intervention, and in other opportunities that may arise (for example, fieldtrips and events)
- recognise the importance of strong, trusting relationships and take into account that children who have had adverse life experiences may require more proactive support in order to develop their relationships with staff and peers
- share any concerns about a child who is looked after or was previously looked after, both academic and wellbeing related, with the DSL and designated teacher as a matter of priority

## 5.0 Procedures and training

- 5.1 Each academy must ensure that they have appointed a designated teacher for children who are looked after or were previously looked after.
- 5.2 The designated teacher, DSL and wider safeguarding team will engage with training and development opportunities offered by their local Virtual School and other agencies.
- 5.3 The designated teacher and DSL will work closely with wider leadership, parents and carers, and other agencies to support the best experience and outcomes for students who are looked after or were previously looked after.
- 5.4 The designated teacher will work closely with the DSL, SENCO, behaviour lead and any other relevant staff in order to best meet the needs of students with multiple vulnerabilities.
- 5.5 The voice of the child will be facilitated on an ongoing basis and central to all decision making regarding their education, wellbeing and care.
- 5.6 The designated teacher and / or DSL will provide training and support for all staff to understand the additional vulnerabilities associated with being a child who is looked after or who was previously looked after, and to develop knowledge and confidence in implementing strategies to address them.
- 5.7 The designated teacher and / or DSL will routinely share information with all staff that will enable them to prioritise and make the best decisions for students who are looked after or were previously looked after in their classes and around the academy.
- 5.8 The designated teacher will engage fully with the PEP, related meetings, children’s social care, and the virtual school e.g. requests for information.
- 5.9 The leadership and governance of each academy will work collaboratively to identify any patterns or concerns relating to the experience and outcomes of children who are looked after or were previously looked after, and plan together to address them.
- 5.10 The quality of teaching for students who are looked after or were previously looked after, the progress they make and their opportunities within the academy, will be central to the academy’s appraisal system and it’s approach to professional development for all staff.

## 6.0 Working with the virtual school

- 6.1 The designated teacher will work closely with Virtual School to plan how funding can be best used to support each child’s progress and meet their education related needs. This will be monitored and reviewed through the PEP meeting and documentation.
- 6.2 The designated teacher will work closely with the virtual school to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children, by seeking information and advice when needed.
- 6.3 In addition to their statutory duties, the role of the VSH was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker. As such, information may be requested, and advice / information can be sought, for any student who has a social worker allocated.

