



## St. Maxentius CEP School

### Policy for The Designated Teacher For Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Agreed on ..... by the LGB

Signed .....Headteacher

Signed .....Chair of Governors

At St. Maxentius School, the 'designated teacher' for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children is :-

Mrs. C. Bennett (Headteacher)

The Designated Governors is :- Margaret Heaton

#### Rationale

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 (SEN). 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 with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning. Excellent practice in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children already exists in many schools. The designated teacher role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice becomes universal.

Attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children shows that they do not perform as well at Key Stage 2 when compared to non-looked-after children.

#### Definitions

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements 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; and
- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

(For children adopted outside England and Wales, the child must have been looked after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.)

At St. Maxentius School, the designated teacher is fully trained and undertakes the responsibilities within the school to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school's roll. The designated teacher and the LGB will regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

At St. Maxentius School, the designated teacher will ask the child's parents for evidence of their previously looked-after status in order to satisfy themselves that the child is eligible for support.

Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, the designated teacher will use his/her discretion. In such circumstances, the designated teacher will discuss eligibility with the Virtual School Head (VSH).

At St. Maxentius School, the designated teacher will :-

- work closely with the child's foster carer (or residential care worker), social worker or, for previously looked-after children, parents or guardian who have day-to-day responsibilities for the child. The VSH will provide more strategic support or advice and information.
- be a central point of initial contact within the school. This helps to 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.
- have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This involves, working with VSHs to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting 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.
- take lead responsibility for ensuring 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. This means making sure that all staff:
  - have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
  - be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
  - understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
  - appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
  - have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and
  - for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

At St. Maxentius School, the designated teacher will contribute 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;
- there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
- there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
- particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;

- thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
- when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and
- 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).

The designated teacher will promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children;

- are 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;
- 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;
- are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
- believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
- can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in a frank manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
- Be a source of advice for teachers about:
  - differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and
  - the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents or 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; and
  - encourage high aspirations and working with the child to plan for their future success and fulfilment.
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary; and
- 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.

### **The designated teacher's role in the PEP**

The designated teacher will :-

- work closely with other teachers (and the SENCo, if required) to identify strengths, weaknesses and any barriers to learning to form the basis for the development or the review and refinement of the PEP.

- Have a key role in making sure the PEP is effective in supporting everyone to help the looked-after pupil to make good educational progress. PEPs will:
  - identify developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
  - set short and long-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate;
  - include a record of planned actions, including milestones on homework, extra tuition and study support, that the school and others will take to promote the educational achievement of the child, based on an assessment of their educational needs;
  - include information on how the child's progress is to be rigorously monitored;
  - record details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to make sure personal education targets are met, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 in relation to English and mathematics
  - say what will happen, or is already happening, to put in place any additional support which may be required - e.g. possible action to support special educational needs involving the SENCO, educational psychologist, or local authority education services
- set out information on what will happen or is already happening to identify and support any mental health needs relevant to the child's education
- set out how a child's aspiration and self-confidence is being nurtured, especially in consideration of longer-term goals towards further and higher education, work experience and career plans. High aspirations are crucial to successful planning for the future. They should focus on young person's strengths and capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve;
- include the child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective;
- be a record of the child's academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning activities (e.g. sporting, personal development);
- provide information which helps all who are supporting the child's educational achievement to understand what works for them, helping to substitute for the role that parents might otherwise provide; and
- have clear accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen.

The designated teacher will have overall responsibility for leading the process of target setting for looked-after children in school, will monitor and track how their attainment progresses, and ensure that identified actions are put in place. The designated teacher will help the school and the local authority that looks after the child to decide what arrangements work best in the development and review of the PEP.

### **Monitoring and reviewing the PEP in school**

The designated teacher will rigorously monitor and evaluate. He/she will :-

- judge whether the teaching and learning and intervention strategies being used are working to support achievement and wellbeing; and
- know whether the young person is likely to meet the attainment targets in their PEP.

If the young person is not on track to meet targets, the designated teacher will be instrumental in agreeing the best way forward with them in order to make progress and ensure that this is reflected in the PEP.

So that there can be an informed discussion at the statutory review of the care plan about the child's progress in school, the designated teacher will :-

- review the PEP before the statutory review of the care plan, it is up-to- date and contains any new information since the last PEP review, including whether agreed provision is being delivered;
- ensure the PEP is 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; and
- ensure they pass the updated PEP to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of the care plan.

### **Transfer of the official school PEP record**

The designated teacher will ensure smooth transition and make arrangements to:

- achieve speedy transfer of the looked-after child's school records to a new school;
- ensure the child's PEP is up to date;
- Ensure that the local authority responsible for looking after the child has the most recent version of the PEP.

### **Transfer out of care**

When children cease to be looked-after, designated teacher will

- consider what is best for continuity and meeting the child's educational needs.
- maintain links with VSHs

### **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)**

All pupil premium spending will take account of the specific needs of eligible pupils. (For both looked-after and previously looked-after children PP+ is not a personal budget for individual children. The VSH and school manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked-after or previously looked-after children and according to children's needs.)

The designated teacher will :-

- For looked-after children, work together with the VSH to agree how this funding can most effectively be used to improve looked-after children's attainment.

The designated teacher will :

- for looked-after children, liaise with the VSH so that the designated teacher can contribute to decisions about how PP+ will support improving the child's educational outcomes;
- help raise previously looked-after children's parents' and guardians' awareness of the PP+ and other support for previously looked-after children
- play a key part in decisions on how the PP+ is used to support previously looked-after children; and
- encourage parents and guardians' involvement in deciding how the PP+ is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries about its use.
- Consider how PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for looked- after and previously looked-after children. Interventions supported by pupil premium plus will be evidence based and in the best interests of the child.

**At St. Maxentius School, when considering the use of PP+, we consider :-**

**Approaches that are:**

- Individually tailored to the needs and strengths of each pupil
- Consistent: based on agreed core principles and components, but also flexible and responsive
- Based on evidence of what works
- Focussed on clear short-term goals which give opportunities for pupils to experience success
- Include regular, high quality feedback from teaching staff
- Engage parents/carers in the agreement and evaluation of arrangements for education support (e.g. via the PEP)
- Supporting pupil transition
- Raising aspirations through access to high-quality educational experiences
- Promote the young person's awareness and understanding of their own thought process (metacognition) and help to develop problem-solving strategies

**Which emphasise:**

- Relationship-building, both with appropriate adults and with peers
- An emotionally intelligent approach to the setting of clear behaviour boundaries
- Increasing pupil's understanding of their own emotions and identity
- Positive reinforcement
- Building self-esteem
- Relevance to the learner: relate to pupil's interests where possible - make it matter to them
- A joined-up approach involving social worker/carer/VSH and other relevant professionals
- Strong and visionary leadership on the part of both of the pupil's head teachers
- A child centred approach to assessment for learning

**Raising awareness and staff training**

The designated teacher will proactively build strong links with the VSH to access training and keep up to date with research and good practice.

The designated teacher will ensure that teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children with regards to, among other things:

- special educational needs (including speech, language and communication needs), which the SENCO can also help support;
- attendance and exclusions;
- homework;
- understanding and managing any challenging behaviour;
- promoting positive educational and recreational activities, and supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to be aspirational for their future education;
- understanding the link between emotional wellbeing and being able to make educational progress; and

The designated teachers' work with previously looked-after children will reflect that their role for previously looked-after children is different to that for looked-after children, as the local authority is no longer their corporate parent.

## **Special educational needs (SEN)**

Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are significantly more likely to have SEN than their peers. Of those with SEN, a significant proportion will have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC plans).

In respect of looked-after children, the designated teacher will ensure that:

- the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice 0 to 25 years, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed; and
- children's PEPs work in harmony with their EHC plan to, coherently and comprehensively, set out how their needs are being met. Care will be taken not to duplicate information already in a child's care plan or PEP. Equally, the child's care plan, including PEP, will feed into the care assessment section of the EHC plan.
- with the help of the VSH, ensure that they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues, and access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable

## **Mental Health**

Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.

The designated has an important role in ensuring they and other school staff can identify signs of potential issues and understand where the school can draw on specialist services, such as CAMHS and educational psychologists. The designated teacher will work with them, and the VSH to ensure that they, and other school staff, have the skills to:

- identify signs of potential mental health issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable; and
- understand the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on looked-after and previously looked-after children and their ability to engage in learning. It is also important that the designated teacher, officer with responsibility for links with mental health services, where the school has one, and other school staff are aware that these issues will continue to affect previously looked-after children, and that the school will need to continue to respond appropriately to their needs.

The designated teacher will put in place robust arrangements to complete their element of SDQs and engage with the relevant VSH. The designated teacher will use the results of the SDQ to help inform the child's PEP.

For previously looked-after children, the designated teacher will work with senior leaders in the school and parents and carers to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of this group of children. The SDQ will be applied to previously looked-after children and their parents where the child's parents or guardian supports its use.

## **Relationships beyond the school**

The designated teacher will proactively engage with partners to enable their school to respond effectively to looked-after and previously looked-after children's needs.

The designated teacher will discuss with the child's social worker 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.

The designated teacher will get to know those who have parental responsibility and encourage them to be actively involved in their child's education. He /she be open and accessible so that those with parental responsibility feel able to approach the designated teacher to discuss the support needs of their child.

### **Working with local authorities**

The designated teacher will consider what arrangements the school should make to facilitate effective co-operation with other professionals, in particular the VSH and SEND department in the authority. The designated teacher will be proactive in building these relationships.

The designated teacher will consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children. In particular, he/she will:

- find ways of making sure that the latest information about educational progress, primarily through the PEP, is available to contribute to the statutory review process of the care plan;
- ensure mechanisms are in place to identify and inform VSHs where looked- after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate action to safeguard the child;
- talk to the child's social worker and/or others in the local authority, such as the VSH or other local authority officer, regarding any decision about changes in care placements which will disrupt a child's education or training;
- provide advice in such cases about the likely impact of disrupting the child's education and what the local authority should do in order to minimise the disruption if a move in educational placement cannot be avoided; and
- make sure that if a looked-after child moves school the designated teacher at the new school is provided with any information they need to help the transition process.

For previously looked-after children, the designated teacher may seek the advice of the VSH about meeting the needs of individual children with the agreement of the child's parents or guardians.

### **Working with carers and parents**

The designated teacher will work closely with a looked-after child's carer as this makes a big difference to how they are able to provide effective support for the child.

Carers will be encouraged to take an active role in participation in PEP planning.

The designated teacher will make sure that:

- there is an agreed process in place for how the school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as the child's social worker, in order to review and develop the child's educational progress and how each person will contribute to driving up the child's educational achievement;
- school policies in relation to, for example, home-school agreements, time- keeping and attendance, and homework diaries and parents' evenings are communicated to carers and social workers and, where appropriate, birth parents, so that looked-after children are not disadvantaged; and
- the child's teachers know the most appropriate person to contact when necessary. For example, in some cases authority to sign permission slips for school trips will be delegated to the carer by the social worker but for some children permission will be needed from the child's social worker.

For previously looked-after children, the designated teacher will work closely with their parents and guardians as they will understand their child's needs better than anyone else. The designated teacher will make themselves

known to parents and guardians as someone they can talk to about issues affecting their child's education. They will be encouraged to participate in discussions about their child's support needs and strategies to meet identified needs, including how PP+ should be used to support their child. The views and wishes of parents and guardians will be respected at all times.

### **Exclusions**

Where a looked-after child is at risk of either fixed term or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher will contact the relevant authority's 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.

Where a child is at risk of a fixed-term or permanent exclusion, the designated teacher, working with the VSH and the child's carers, will consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for exclusion.

When a child leaves care, the school will look to support the child to improve their behaviour to avoid exclusion becoming necessary. Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, the designated teacher will talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking the advice of the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

### **The role of the governing body**

The governing body 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?
- the designated teacher has appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership 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?
- the designated teacher 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 SEN?
- the designated teacher role 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?
- resource implications are considered
- the designated teacher has a support network which he/she can call on within and outside the school such as SENCOs, health and mental health support?
- monitoring arrangements are appropriate to ensure that the role of the designated teacher is providing appropriate support for looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school roll?
- there are no unintended barriers to the admission of looked-after and previously looked-after children either at normal transition or any other point of the school year;
- whether there are any issues arising as a result of the number of looked-after and previously looked-after children on roll at the school and the number of local authorities which are involved;
- whether looked-after and previously looked-after children have made the expected or better levels of progress over the past twelve months in line with their peers (i.e. educational, social and emotional progress);
- whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked-after and previously looked-after children is different to that of other children at the school;
- for looked-after children, whether the school's policies are sensitive to their needs, e.g. in accessing out

of school hours learning, respecting the children's wishes and feelings about their care status or generally meeting their needs as identified in their personal education plans (PEPs);

- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met;
- whether any looked-after or previously looked-after children face additional safeguarding challenges of which the school's designated safeguarding lead should be aware;
- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level;
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- whether any looked-after and previously looked-after children have mental health needs and whether those needs are being identified and met;
- whether the school's behaviour management policy is sufficiently flexible to respond to looked-after and previously looked-after children's challenging behaviour in the most effective way for those children;
- how the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are reflected in school policies, in particular in relation to interventions and resources;
- what the impact is of any of the school's policies, e.g. on charging for educational visits and extended school activities, on looked-after children; an
- what impact Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) has in supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The LGB receive a termly report on how the school supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the PP+ is used) and their level of progress