

Designated Teacher for Children Looked After & Children Previously Looked After Policy Sidmouth Primary School

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1 Thrive Charter

Thrive Mission Statement

Inspiring pupils to thrive in life

Thrive Values¹

Thrive Co-operative Learning Trust **understands *thriving to mean learning***, and *learning* to mean **growing in knowledge, self-reliance and in responsibility towards others**. Achieving this will allow pupils and staff to **develop a sense of agency and co-agency**, which is the awareness that we are powerful and can affect change, that life is something to be grasped rather than something that happens, and that we have maximum impact when ***we work together for the common good***. This sense of agency plays out at three scales as it affects the future of ***the individual, their community (local and national), and their planet***.

To thrive, pupils and staff need **environments that are safe, for equality to be promoted and diversity to be celebrated**, and for **wellbeing to be valued, nurtured and supported**.

- Because the service we provide is crucial to each pupil's future life chances, we ensure that **we give all pupils the opportunity to thrive**, whatever their background or perceived abilities.
- Because our task is challenging **we all strive to grow and develop**, and we support each other in this and in developing a good work-life balance.
- Because thriving happens best where adults provide pupils with a consistency of approach, **we need people who will play their part for the greater good of the team**.
- Because we serve our local communities **we act as partners in the process of assisting our children to thrive** and will work cooperatively to see this happen.
- Because leadership is a privilege **we exercise leadership in an ethical manner** and commit ourselves to upholding [The Seven Principles of Public Life](#).
- Because we are facing a climate crisis **we will work towards being an environmentally sustainable organisation** and will develop pupil and staff participation in achieving this.
- Because we are funded with public money we will ensure that **we focus our resources on pupils and enable them to thrive**.

2 Introduction

Prior to final approval by the LGB, this policy has been the subject of review and suggested amendments have been taken into consideration and changes made where they can be agreed.

¹ Thrive's values are directly descended from the [Co-operative Values](#)

3 Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and children previously looked-after;
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and children previously looked-after, 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.

4 Legislation and statutory guidance

- 4.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and children previously looked-after](#).
- 4.2 It also takes into account [section 2E](#) of the Academies Act 2010.
- 4.3 This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

5 Definitions

5.1 Children Looked-after

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.

5.2 Children Previously looked-after

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 of care as a result of being adopted.

5.3 Personal education plan (PEP)

The PEP is part of a child looked-after'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.

5.4 Virtual school head (VSH)

- 5.4.1 The VSH is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of the authority's children looked-after, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school.
- 5.4.2 The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of children previously looked-after.

6 Identity of our Designated Teacher

- 6.1 Our designated teacher is **Sarah Hawksley**.
- 6.2 You can contact them via the school contact details.
- 6.3 Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children looked-after and children previously looked-after at our school. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

7 Roles of the Designated Teacher

The following is based on the responsibilities listed in the [DfE's statutory guidance](#).

8 Leadership Responsibilities

8.1 The Designated Teacher

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving children looked-after and children previously looked-after;
- Promote the educational achievement of every child looked-after and child previously looked-after on roll by:
 - Working with VSHs
 - 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 looked-after and children previously looked-after 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 looked-after and children previously looked-after;
- Promote a culture in which a child looked-after and a child previously looked-after are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities;
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with a child looked-after and a child previously looked-after;
- Work directly with children looked-after and children previously looked-after 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 childrens looked-after PEPs;

- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding children looked-after and children previously looked-after are quickly and effectively responded to;
- Involve parents and guardians of children previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

8.2 Supporting Children Looked-After

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 school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils;
- Ensure that:
 - A child looked-after'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 looked-after'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.

8.3 Supporting Both Children Looked-After & Children Previously Looked-After

The designated teacher will:

- Ensure the specific needs of looked-after and children previously looked-after are understood by staff and reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding;
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for children looked-after can most effectively be used to improve their attainment;
- Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of children previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children;
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children;
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil 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 children previously looked-after in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning;
- Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and children previously looked-after, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this;

- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to children looked-after, is followed;
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a child looked-after may have;
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and children previously looked-after, 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 children previously looked-after 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 looked-after, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs;
- Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of children previously looked-after.

8.4 Relationships Beyond School

The designated teacher will:

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

9 Public Sector Equality Duty

9.1 The Equality Act 2010 replaced and unified all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It aims to ensure that people have equality of opportunity in accessing and experiencing public services. Schools when carrying out their day to day work should have regard to the following:

- eliminating discrimination;
- advancing equality of opportunity and;
- foster good relations across all characteristics

9.2 Schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment. This means it is now unlawful to discriminate against a transgender pupil or a pupil who is pregnant or recently had a baby.

9.3 This policy was reviewed and updated with reference to this duty. The author/s of this document considered this policy in the light of these requirements to ensure that this School adheres to these statutory regulations.

10 Person Responsible

Updated Spring 2024

Head of School

To be reviewed Spring 2025