

RAVENSCOTE JUNIOR SCHOOL

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

2024 - 2026



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January 2024		January 2026	
Signed	Amy Wells Headteacher	Signed	Emily Gibson Chair of Governors



Ravenscote Junior School Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Miss Francesca Porta-Rios inclusion@ravenscote.surrey.sch.uk 01276 709007 Member of the Senior Leadership Team
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Purpose

To ensure that:

- a suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher (DT) for looked after and previously looked after children for the school.
- the educational achievement and welfare of looked after and previously looked after children is promoted within Ravenscote Junior School.
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

Rationale

Looked after children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of looked after children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that considerable educational underachievement exists when compared to their peers.

For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements
- lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- under-achievement in further and higher education.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is '**looked after**' by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).



The term '**In Care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the Court under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with Foster Carers, in a Children's Home, in a Residential School, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be '**looked after children**' (**LAC**). They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Surrey.

Definitions

Looked After Children (LAC) 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

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) 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 child who is 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.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked after children, 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 and guardians in respect of previously looked after children.

Legislation and statutory guidance:

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children' (2018) and 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children' (2018). It also considers section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.

The Designated Teacher role:

The Designated Teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic



needs are prioritised. In promoting the educational achievement of looked after children the Designated Teacher should:

- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put Looked After Children at a disadvantage;
- act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked after or previously looked after children;
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support a looked after child's learning. Particular account should be taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what he or she can achieve;
- promote a culture in which Looked After Children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- promote a culture in which 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;
- be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children who are looked after;
- make sure the school makes full use of assessment approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of Looked After Children and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there;
- make sure that Looked After Children 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;
- promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers. In particular, they should make sure that carers understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary, including VSHs
- 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;
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need-to-know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student;
- have overall responsibility for leading the process of target setting in PEPs;
- ensure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care plans that a looked after child may have;
- ensure that they and other staff can identify signs of potential mental health issues in looked after or previously looked after children and understand where the school can draw on specialist services;
- ensure the specific needs of looked after and previously looked after children are reflected in how the school uses pupil premium funding;



- 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.

The Designated Teacher will report on:

- the number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a PEP
- their attendance compared to other students
- their attainment compared to other students
- the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
- the destinations of students who leave the school

Good practice for all staff:

The Designated Teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how Looked After Children learn and achieve.

Everyone involved in helping Looked After Children achieve should:

- have high expectations of Looked After Children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children but never allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- understand how important it is to see Looked After Children as individuals rather than as a group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and the child of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, virtual school heads in local authorities and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care.

Good practice suggests that the Local Advisory Committee will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. The appointment of a Designated Teacher in accordance with the Regulations is a core function of the governing body. The guidance referred to earlier sets out what the school governing body collectively will need to do in order to fulfil its duty under section 20 of the 2008 Act and the Regulations.



Admissions

At Ravenscote School we believe that it is vital that all new students receive a positive welcome and full support for their inclusion in our learning community.

Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

Ravenscote school assesses each looked after child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. With the child's social worker, we will organise a termly Personal Education Plan – PEP - and will ensure the young person is actively involved. Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP review meetings and provide copies of the PEP to the social worker and other agencies. The allocation and purpose of the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) will be included within the PEP. All PEPs are completed electronically through the online system provided by the virtual school.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher knows all the looked after children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Virtual School specialist staff, teacher and social worker. The status of Looked After Children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available to all classroom teachers and relevant staff. Looked After Children are identified as a vulnerable group when tracking, monitoring and reporting on attainment and progress.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support a Looked After child. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with Looked After Children within the school and disseminate information.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We believe in developing strong partnerships with parents/carers and care workers to enable Looked After Children to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We will work in partnership with Surrey Virtual School for Looked After Children and other Virtual Schools for children who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that Looked After Children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting Looked After Children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual Looked After Children:

- Social care worker
- Virtual School
- Other Virtual Schools for Looked After Children from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists
- Specialist Teachers of Inclusive Practice
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS



- Inclusion Officers
- Alternative provisions

Alternative Provision

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision, alternative to daily attendance at school, will be:

- a plan that will retain the Looked After Child on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall PEP for the child
- meet the educational needs of the Looked After Child
- monitored regularly and that PEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

Exclusion

We will make every effort to avoid excluding a Looked After Child, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for a fixed-term exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than a fixed-term exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of exclusion of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Related Policies

Staff should refer to the following policies that are related to this Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy:

- Positive behaviour
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Exclusions
- SEND

