The Oakwood Academy

# DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED-AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN

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REDHILL ACADEMY TRUST

**CONTENTS**


**1. AIMS ..... 3**
**2. DEFINITIONS ..... 3**
**3. IDENTITY OF OUR DESIGNATED TEACHER ..... 3**
**4. ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER..... 4**

## 1. AIMS

The academy aims to ensure that:

- a suitable member of staff (qualified teacher) is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- the designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- the designated teacher works with the requirements of each relevant Local Authority
- 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. DEFINITIONS

**Looked-after children** are registered students 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** are registered students 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 looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the academy. 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 academies to monitor and support these students as if they were in a single academy. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to academies, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children. The VSH is part of a wider virtual school team (VST).

## 3. IDENTITY OF OUR DESIGNATED TEACHER

Our designated teacher is Jo Crane

You can contact them by email at j.crane@oakwoodacademy.org.uk

The nominated deputy for the designated teacher is Nathan Brown

You can contact them by email at n.brown@oakwoodacademy.org.uk

Our designated teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our academy. They, or the nominated deputy are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out below.

## 4. ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

### Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- act as a central point of initial contact within the academy for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children, ensuring that the voice of the child is listened to
    - promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
    - working with VSH/VSTs
    - promoting a whole academy culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised
- take lead responsibility for ensuring academy staff understand:
    - the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
    - how the whole academy supports the educational achievement of these students
- contribute to the development and review of whole academy policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other academy activities
- act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- ensure that all opportunities are explored to secure maximum funding for each relevant child
- work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-academy links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- work closely with the academy's designated safeguarding lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education

### Supporting looked-after children

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 academy and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for students
- ensure that:
    - a looked-after child'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/VST ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- transfer a looked-after child's PEP to their next academy or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after them has the most recent version

**Supporting both looked-after children and previously looked-after children**

The designated teacher will:

- ensure the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by staff and reflected in how the academy uses student premium funding
- work with VSH/VSTs to agree how student premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment
- help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about student premium funding and other support for these children
- play a key part in decisions on how student premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how student 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 previously looked-after children in areas like attendance, homework, behaviour and future career planning
- be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this
- ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed
- work with curriculum leads & SENDCO on provision where appropriate
- make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have
- ensure that, with the help of VSH/VSTs, they have the skills to identify signs of potential SEN issues in looked-after and previously looked-after children, 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 previously looked-after children and understand where the academy can draw on specialist services
- put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for looked-after children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs

- put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

**Relationships beyond the academy**

The designated teacher will:

- proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the academy to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- discuss with social workers how the academy should engage with birth parents, and ensure the academy is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom
- be open and accessible to parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and encourage them to be actively involved in their children's education
- proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSH/VSTs and SEN departments
- consider how the academy works with others outside of the academy to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children, 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 VSH/VSTs when looked-after children 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 looked-after child moves academy, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- seek advice from VSH/VSTs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or guardians
- make sure that for each looked-after child:
    - there's an agreed process for how the academy works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
    - academy 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 looked-after child or previously looked after child is at risk of exclusion:
    - contact the VSH/VST as soon as possible so they can help the academy decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour
    - work with the VSH/VST 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