

SUTTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

The Board of Trustees and staff at Sutton Grammar School are committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment, promoting equality and diversity and ensuring the well-being of all members of the school community. It is their clear intention to promote good behaviour and to exercise their responsibilities in ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of all students and staff within this community, including looked after children and previously looked after children.

Staff member with responsibility:	Kate Ross, Deputy Head
Reviewed by:	Board of Trustees
Policy Agreed date:	December 2018
Next review date:	December 2021

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Key Personnel:

The Headmaster is: Mr Gordon Ironside

Email: gironside@suttonmail.org Telephone: 020 8661 4504

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is: Ms Kate Ross

Email: kross17@suttonmail.org Telephone: 020 8661 4501

The Designated Teacher for Previously Looked After Children: Mr Tony Blunt

Email: ablunt@suttonmail.org Telephone: 020 8661 4505

Terminology:

Looked After Child refers to a child who is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours. The term 'Children in Care' is also used to define the same group of young people.

Previously Looked After Child refers to a child who is no longer looked after because he/she is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

Virtual School: the Virtual School does not exist in terms of a building and children and young people do not attend. It is a service provided by dedicated professionals within the Children, Schools and Families Directorate whose work is to promote and co-ordinate educational support for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Virtual School Head (VSH): the headteacher of the virtual school. They work strategically across the authority and with schools to monitor and support the educational achievement of looked-after children as if they were in a single school. Each local authority has its own virtual school.

A **Designated Teacher** is a member of the Senior Leadership Team who is responsible for the educational achievement of any looked-after and previously looked-after children in their school.

A **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is a record of the child's education and training. It describes what needs to happen for a looked-after child to help them fulfil their potential. The government has made PEPs a statutory requirement for looked-after children to help track and promote their achievements.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child means everyone under the age of 18.

1. INTRODUCTION:

(i) Looked-After Children

When a child or young person is taken into care by a local authority under a court order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority – who become their ‘Corporate Parent’. Young people can also be in care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a status known as ‘accommodated’) where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, but this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but some may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). It is important the school attended by the child is aware of their care status, as many children and families are supported by social care without the use of care orders. Foster carers will very rarely hold parental responsibility – this is assumed by the social worker. Children placed for adoption remain looked after by the local authority until the final order.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is required for every child in care and forms part of their overall Care Plan. The Care Plan should be in place within six weeks of entering care and thereafter reviewed at least every term.

The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard looked-after children, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to ‘achieve to reach their full potential’. The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this is set out under six principles:



The role of a Virtual Headteacher for looked-after children is now statutory for every local authority.

Virtual Headteachers will scrutinise, challenge and support schools with their teaching and learning for all children in care and assist each other in this task where children cross physical borders to live and attend education provision.

(ii) Previously Looked-After Children

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after because he/she is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

Virtual Headteachers have a statutory duty to provide advice and support to schools in relation to their support role for previously looked-after children; and to help promote their educational achievement.

2. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADMASTER AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM:

- The school will promote a culture in which looked-after children and previously looked-after children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out.
- The school will appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children and a Designated Teacher for Previously Looked-After Children.
- The school will ensure the Designated Teachers are able to fulfil their roles and responsibilities (This will include the provision of time to undertake the role; supporting training needs and providing opportunities for the cascade of training to all staff and governors in the school).
- The school will ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by looked-after children and previously looked-after children; and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them (a young person's ability to engage in learning can be undermined by feelings of loss, rejection, confusion, insecurity and low self-esteem – being or becoming 'in care' has a major impact on children's lives).
- The school will recognise the particular circumstances of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and provide for these in all other school policies.
- The school will ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for, individual children.
- The school is committed to working with local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- The school is committed to promoting a 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.

3. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN:

- To have high expectations of looked-after children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all looked-after children in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- To support the well-being and mental health of looked-after children, ensuring all needs are identified and met.
- To act as an advocate for looked-after children.

- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of looked-after children.
- To promote the involvement of these children in the co-curricular programme.
- To be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority children's services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners.
- To work with the Virtual School Headteacher to agree how funding (Pupil Premium +) can be most effectively used to improve looked-after children's attainment¹.
- To ensure every looked-after child has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) that includes appropriate educational targets and encourages the 'voice of the child' to be heard².
- To oversee the implementation as well as termly reviews of Personal Education Plans to ensure they are meeting the needs of the looked-after child.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- To work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- To provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate.
- To present, when appropriate, an annual report to the board of trustees.
- To access statutory training events organised by Sutton Virtual School (as a minimum requirement).
- To cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

4. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN:

- To have high expectations of previously looked-after children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all previously looked-after children in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- To support the well-being and mental health of previously looked-after children, ensuring all needs are identified and met.
- To be available to provide direct advice and support to those that have parental responsibility for previously looked-after children.
- To promote the continuing needs of previously looked-after children.
- To work with the senior leadership team and Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children to ensure the effective support and the educational achievement of previously looked-after children.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of previously looked-after children; and provide advice for teachers and staff.
- To promote the involvement of these children in the co-curricular programme.

¹ Guidance on 'getting the most from PP+' can be found on page 23 of 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' (2018)

² Guidance on this can be found on page 20 of 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' (2018)

- To work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- To access statutory training events organised by Sutton Virtual School (as a minimum requirement) or other relevant virtual schools.

5. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF:

- To be aware of looked-after children and previously looked-after children and, where appropriate, be familiar with their educational needs.
- To have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's involvement in learning, educational progress and personal development.
- To ensure that looked-after children and previously looked-after children are supported sensitively.
- To respond positively to a request to attend training specifically aimed at supporting looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- To respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- To promote the self-esteem of looked-after children and previously looked-after children; maintain confidentiality and ensure that no looked-after or previously looked-after child is stigmatised in any way.

6. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUST:

- The Trust will appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children and a Designated Teacher for Previously Looked-After Children in accordance with the regulations.
- The Trust will ensure the Designated Teachers are given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- The Trust will monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The Trust will ensure all members are briefed about the guidance on the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- The Trust will monitor the effectiveness of the role and receive, when relevant, an annual report from the Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children.
- The Trust will examine whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, such as additional funding, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for looked-after children and previously looked-after children to achieve.
- The Trust will scrutinise the schools admission procedures to ensure students are admitted as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care.
- The Trust will champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated Teachers.