

Children In Care (Looked After Children)

Aspire - Challenge – Achieve

Owner	Approval	By Whom	Review
K Belcher C Wright	September 2026	TBOD	Annually

The South Lincolnshire Academy Trust Children In Care

Each Trust school has a nominated Designated Teacher (DT). This is to ensure that whenever one of the pupils becomes looked after, or a new child in care is **admitted** to the school there is a teacher who is already trained to carry out this important role.

Designated Teacher allocation

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Children In Care Leads (DT)	Brett Sinclair Trust Chris Wright GA Katie Belcher BA Glenn Martin SA Kath Kilby CA	01778 422365 01205 870693 01778 422365 01775 722484 01775 820254
Designated Children In Care Managers (School based)	Julia Kettle BA Charlotte Berry SA Emma Amos-Linley GA Laura Bell CA	01778 422365 01775 722484 01205 870693 01775 820254
Trust SENCO	Dawne Pearson	dawne.pearson@spaldingacademy.org.uk
Designated Support for Children In Care (SLT member)	Mark Bryan (BA) Matt Leonard (SA) Sally Donaldson (GA) Ian Billinghamurst (CA)	bryanm@bourneacademy.org matt.leonard@spaldingacademy.org.uk sdonaldson@gilesacademy.co.uk ian.billinghurst@cowleyacademy.org.uk
Chief Executive Officer	Jemma Curson	01778 422365

Vision

At South Lincolnshire Academies Trust, we believe that every child in care and care-experienced young person deserves the very best educational experience and life chances. We are committed to creating a culture of high expectations, strong relationships and effective support, ensuring that all children in care are safe, valued, included and empowered to achieve their full potential. Our ambition is that all children in care thrive academically, socially and emotionally, enabling them to successfully transition into adulthood and future employment.

Our Commitment

At South Lincolnshire Academies Trust, we recognise our collective responsibility to be ambitious advocates for children in care and care-experienced young people. Through high expectations, strong relationships and effective partnership working, we will ensure every child is supported to Aspire, Challenge and Achieve.

This will be achieved by our strategic aims:

1. A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
2. The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement and aspiration of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too.
3. Promoting Improve attendance, engagement and participation.
4. Promoting access and inclusion in all areas of school life
5. Supporting early intervention
6. Strengthen safeguarding, advocacy and student voice.
7. Promoting social, emotional, mental health and well-being
8. Working in partnership with parents, carers, social workers and other professionals
9. Prepare children in care for successful adulthood and future pathways.

1.1 Guiding Principles

- The voice of the child is of paramount importance
- All care-experienced children will receive high quality education which is inspiring and challenging, resulting in the best possible outcomes, thus closing the educational gap between these children and those who are not care experienced
- Every care-experienced child will have a positive educational experience which promotes social and emotional learning and wellbeing alongside academic success to ensure readiness for adulthood
- SLAT will meet the needs of care-experienced children through effective liaison and integrated work with all key partners including the relevant Virtual School.

1.2 Definitions

A **looked-after child** is defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is:

- in the care of a local authority; or
- provided with accommodation by a local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

A child may become looked after through a number of arrangements, including:

- a) Children accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents or those with parental responsibility (Section 20 Children Act 1989).
- b) Children who are subject to a Care Order (Section 31) or an Interim Care Order (Section 38).
- c) Children who are subject to emergency protective arrangements, including an Emergency Protection Order (Section 44) or Police Protection (Section 46).
- d) Children who are compulsorily accommodated, including those remanded to local authority accommodation or subject to certain youth justice orders (Section 21).

Previously looked-after children are children who ceased to be looked after because they became subject to:

- a) an Adoption Order;
- b) a Special Guardianship Order (SGO); or
- c) a Child Arrangements Order (CAO) providing for the child to live with, or spend time with, a person who is not their parent.

Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Headteacher and Governing Body

The Chief Executive Officer at SLAT is committed to promoting improved educational life chances for all care-experienced children. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Headteacher (Designated Safeguarding Leads/Designated Teacher) for each school will lead and manage the provision for all assigned Children in Care. The assigned Governor for Safeguarding will also review and regulate the provision in place for Children in Care.

Regular communication between the Chief Executive Officer, DCEO and Governor should include:

- The number of care-experienced children on roll
- Compliance and quality of individual children's Personal Education Plan (for Children in Care)
- The use and impact of the Pupil Premium Plus grant in raising educational outcomes
- Attendance and exclusion data (in comparison to children who are not care-experienced)
- Progress and attainment data (in comparison to children who are not care-experienced)
- Destinations for care-experienced children that leave SLAT schools

2.2 The Designated Teacher for Children in Care (DT)

The Designated Person for Children previously in Care (DP)

- Have a thorough understanding of relevant legislation and statutory guidance and undertake appropriate training as required.
- Lead on promoting and raising the educational achievement of all children in care and previously looked-after children on the school roll, working closely with the Virtual School Head (VSH) and fostering a whole-school culture in which their needs are recognised, understood and prioritised.
- Ensure that every child in care has a high-quality, up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP) and that progress towards agreed outcomes is regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Monitor and evaluate the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding to maximise educational progress, attainment and wider outcomes for children in care.
- Ensure that the social, emotional, mental health and wellbeing needs of care-experienced children are identified, understood and appropriately supported.
- Take lead responsibility for helping all staff understand the impact that care experiences, trauma, attachment difficulties, loss and instability may have on children's learning, behaviour and achievement.
- Act as the key point of contact and liaison for social workers, carers, parents, the Virtual School, local authorities and other relevant professionals.

- Act as a source of advice, guidance and support for staff working with looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure that confidential and personal information is shared appropriately and only with those who need to know, in accordance with data protection requirements and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Promote attendance, engagement in learning, enrichment opportunities and participation in extracurricular activities.
- Recognise the impact of transitions, including between schools, phases of education and placements, and ensure appropriate planning and support is in place.
- Contribute to the development, implementation and review of whole-school policies and practices to ensure they reflect and meet the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Advocate for the voice of the child and ensure their wishes, feelings and views are appropriately considered in decision-making.
- Monitor attendance, attainment, progress, behaviour, exclusions and participation to identify and address any emerging concerns at an early stage.
- Work with safeguarding and pastoral teams to promote stability, inclusion and positive educational experiences.

2.3 SLAT Schools Staff

All staff will play an active role in embedding a **care-experienced children-friendly culture** that is attachment-aware, trauma-informed and inclusive. Staff will recognise the potential impact of care experiences, trauma, loss and disrupted attachments on children's learning, behaviour, attendance and wellbeing.

Staff will support children in care and previously looked-after children by:

- attending relevant training and professional development opportunities;
- seeking advice and guidance from the Designated Teacher where appropriate;
- sharing relevant information with the Designated Teacher on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements;
- promoting positive relationships, stability and a sense of belonging;
- maintaining high aspirations and expectations for all care-experienced children; and
- contributing to the early identification of, and response to, any barriers to learning, attendance, wellbeing or achievement.

Our staff will uphold the Trust motto of **ASPIRE – CHALLENGE – ACHIEVE** by maintaining high expectations for care-experienced children and supporting them to fulfil their potential, achieve positive educational outcomes and participate fully in school life.

Main points for the purposes of this guidance

- A **child looked after by a local authority** is defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by a local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.
- A **previously looked-after child** is a child who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of:
 - an Adoption Order;
 - a Special Guardianship Order; or

- a Child Arrangements Order that provides for the child to live with, or spend time with, a person who is not their parent.

This also includes children who appear to the governing body to have been in state care outside England and Wales and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

- A child is considered to have been in **state care outside England and Wales** if they were accommodated by or in the care of a public authority, a religious organisation, or another organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Following this guidance, the governing body and school leaders will fulfil their statutory responsibilities to promote the educational achievement, wellbeing and inclusion of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

2.4 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Every child in care must have a Care Plan, of which the **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** forms an integral part. The PEP supports a child's educational development from early years through to the age of 18 and should set out the actions, support and resources required to help them fulfil their educational potential. The PEP is a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the child's changing needs, strengths, aspirations and progress.

The quality of the PEP is a shared responsibility between:

- the Local Authority;
- the Virtual School Head (VSH);
- the school;
- the Designated Teacher;
- the child's allocated Social Worker;
- carers, parents (where appropriate) and other relevant professionals; and
- the child or young person.
- every child in care has a high-quality and up-to-date PEP;
- the child or young person's views, wishes and aspirations are considered and reflected in the PEP;
- the PEP supports a personalised approach to learning and addresses the child's identified educational needs;
- all relevant professionals work collaboratively to develop, review and implement the PEP;
- appropriate early years or nursery provision is included where relevant;
- targeted academic support is provided where a child has fallen behind or requires additional assistance;
- attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, social and emotional development, and educational progress are monitored and supported;
- effective use of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding is identified within the PEP and regularly reviewed;
- appropriate transition planning is in place when a child changes school, placement or educational phase;
- support is provided to help children achieve their aspirations, including access to careers education, information, advice and guidance;
- opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities, enrichment programmes, study support and wider personal development are considered;
- any barriers to learning are identified and appropriate interventions put in place; and
- where a child is unable to attend school, appropriate educational provision is arranged in collaboration with the Local Authority and other relevant professionals.

PEP meetings will review the child's progress, attainment, attendance, wellbeing, aspirations and support needs. Decisions regarding educational provision, interventions and the use of Pupil Premium Plus funding will be recorded within the PEP. Contributions may be made through the Local Authority's electronic PEP system (ePEP), where applicable.

2.4a 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 school uses pupil premium plus funding
- Access training and keep up to date with good practice, to ensure that they and other school staff have strong awareness and training around the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and how to support them
- Liaise with VSHs to contribute to decisions about how pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their educational outcomes
- Help raise the awareness of parents, carers and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium plus funding and other support for these children, including encouraging them to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract pupil premium plus funding
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium plus funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Encourage parents', carers' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium plus 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 such as 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 other staff also have awareness and understanding of this
- Ensure the [SEND code of practice](#), as it relates to looked-after children, is followed
- Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a care-experienced child may have
- Ensure that, with the help of VSHs, 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 how these can impact on the children and their ability to engage in learning, and understand where the school can draw on specialist services
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) completed for care-experienced children, and use the results of these SDQs to inform PEPs
- Work with senior leaders and other relevant staff to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children

2.5 Communicating with Agencies

- The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the looked after children's social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.
- The school will co-ordinate their review meetings, for example, hold their annual review of looked after children with their statutory care review.

- The school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues.

2.6 Staff Responsibilities

- Staff will be aware of looked after children in their classes and provide them with support and encouragement.
- Staff will preserve confidentiality and show sensitivity and understanding.
- Staff will be vigilant for signs of bullying
- Staff will promote the self-esteem of looked after children.
- Where a care-experienced child is at risk of exclusion:
- Contact the Virtual School 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 Virtual School 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 previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents, carers or guardians before seeking advice from the Virtual School on avoiding exclusion

2.7 Associated Legislation and Policies

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to:

- The Children Act 1989;
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000;
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010;
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008;
- The Children and Families Act 2014;
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008; and
- The Department for Education statutory guidance *The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children*. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's:

- Admissions Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Code of Conduct;
- Home-School Agreement;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; and
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy (where applicable).