DESIGNATED TEACHER POLICY (Looked-after and previously looked-after children)

Status: Statutory

Member of Staff Responsible: Principal/Assistant Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead

Related Policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Positive Mental Health Policy

Implementation date:

Reviewed date: September 2026

Next review date: September 2027

Aims

The UTC and Governing Body ensures that:

- An appropriate senior member of the leadership team is appointed to the role of 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 local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.
- The Designated Teacher has appropriate training and relevant qualifications and experience.
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

It also takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010, section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, and the extension of the Designated Teacher's role to previously looked-after children introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This policy is reinforced by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, which reflects looked-after and previously looked-after children as a specific priority safeguarding group.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

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 arrangement order, which includes arrangements relating to who the student lives with and when they are to live with them
- A special guardianship order
- An adoption order

They appear to the governing body 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 UTC. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the student reaches their full potential.

Previously looked-after children do not have a statutory requirement for a PEP; however, good practice is for the UTC to ensure their needs are identified and supported through its own systems, including the use of pupil premium funding described below.

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 students 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.

Identity of Our Designated Teacher

At UTC Derby Pride Park our Designated Teacher is Sharon Hunt, who is a member of our Senior Leadership Team as Assistant Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead.

You can contact her by e-mailing shunt@utcderby.org.uk or calling 01332 477400.

Our Designated Teacher takes lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children at our UTC. They are your initial point of contact for any of the matters set out in the section below.

Leadership Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the UTC for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children

Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:

- Working with VSHs
- Promoting a whole UTC culture where the needs of these students matter and are prioritised
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring UTC staff understand:
- The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
- How the whole UTC supports the educational achievement of these students
- Contributing to the development and review of whole UTC policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promoting a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other UTC activities
- Acting as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Working directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers/parents and guardians to promote good home-UTC links, support progress and encourage high aspirations.

- Having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs
- As Designated Safeguarding Lead, ensuring that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involving 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 student'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 student 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 UTC 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 student's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan
- A looked-after child's PEP is transferred 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

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 UTC uses pupil premium funding
- Work with VSHs to agree how pupil 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 pupil premium funding and other support for these children – the Pupil Premium Plus rate for looked-after children is confirmed annually by the DfE (£2,630 per pupil for the 2025 to 2026 financial year); the Designated Teacher should confirm the current rate each year via the DfE's Pupil Premium Conditions of Grant
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children

- 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
- 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 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 understand where the UTC can draw on specialist services (see the Positive Mental Health Policy)
- Put in place robust arrangements to use appropriate resources such as strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs), and use of PASS data 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 UTC

The Designated Teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the UTC to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Discuss with social workers how the UTC should engage with birth parents, and ensure the UTC 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 VSHs and SEN departments

Consider how the UTC works with others outside of the UTC 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 VSHs when looked-after children are absent without authorisation and work with the responsible authority to take appropriate safeguarding action (see the Attendance and Punctuality Policy)
- Talking to the student's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the student'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 school, their new designated teacher receives any information needed to help the transition process
- Seeking advice from VSHs 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 UTC works in partnership with the student's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
- UTC 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 is at risk of exclusion:

- Contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the UTC decide how to support the student to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary
- Working with the VSH and student's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the causes of the student's behaviour
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the student's parents or guardians before seeking advice from the VSH on avoiding exclusion

Key Changes for 2026-2027

This page summarises the substantive changes made during this review.

- Cover: Cleaned up duplicate/stale title lines carried over from previous versions. Review date and Next Review date updated to September 2026 and September 2027. An Associated Policies field has been added – the previous version had none.
- Legislation and Statutory Guidance: Added section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (which extended the Designated Teacher's role to previously looked-after children), and cross-referenced Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Definitions: New clarifying note added confirming that previously looked-after children do not have a statutory requirement for a PEP, though good practice is to identify and support their needs through the UTC's own systems.
- Pupil Premium Plus: Current confirmed rate added (£2,630 per pupil for looked-after children, 2025-26 financial year), with a note that this is confirmed annually by the DfE and should be checked each year rather than treated as fixed.
- Cross-references added to the Positive Mental Health Policy and the Attendance and Punctuality Policy at the relevant points.
- Note: This policy is closely linked to the Pupil Premium Statement, which is still outstanding due to a missing source file – once available, the two should be checked against each other for consistency, particularly on Pupil Premium Plus usage and reporting.