PSJP18

Penistone St John's Primary School Designated Teacher Policy

(looked-after and previously looked-after children)

Approved by:	Governors	**Date:**	October 2026
Last reviewed on:	Autumn 26		
Next review due by:	Autumn 27		
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1. Aims

At Penistone St John's Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that all looked-after children (LAC) and previously looked-after children (PLAC) are supported to achieve their full educational potential and experience success within a nurturing, inclusive and ambitious school environment.

The school aims to ensure that:

- A suitable member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement, wellbeing, attendance and inclusion of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Staff understand the impact of trauma, attachment difficulties, adverse childhood experiences and disrupted learning on children's development and education.
- Looked-after and previously looked-after children receive the support and intervention they need to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.
- Parents, carers, guardians and professionals are aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher and understand how to access support.
- The school works effectively with carers, parents, social workers, Virtual School Heads (VSHs) and other professionals to secure positive outcomes for children.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on:

- The Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance *The Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children*.
- The Children Act 1989.
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
- Section 20 and Section 20A of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
- The Children and Families Act 2014.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015).

This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, attendance, anti-bullying and inclusion policies.

3. Definitions

Looked-After Children (LAC)

A looked-after child is a registered pupil 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.

Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)

A previously looked-after child is a registered pupil who:

- Was previously looked after by a local authority but left care through:
    - An adoption order;
    - A special guardianship order; or
    - A child arrangements order.

A previously looked-after child also includes children who appear to the Governing Body to have:

- Been in state care outside England and Wales due to circumstances that would have resulted in local authority care if they were in England; and
- Ceased to be in state care as a result of adoption.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

A Personal Education Plan is part of a looked-after child's care plan and identifies:

- Educational strengths and needs;
- Targets for progress;
- Support and provision required;
- Responsibilities of those involved in supporting the child.

Virtual School Head (VSH)

The Virtual School Head is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and offering advice regarding previously looked-after children.

4. Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children at Penistone St John's Primary School is:

Sarah Foster
Role: SENCo/Designated Teacher
Email: s.foster@penistonestjohns.org
Telephone: 01226 762496

The Designated Teacher has lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement, attendance, wellbeing and inclusion of looked-after and previously looked-after children within the school.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure the school appoints an appropriately trained Designated Teacher.
- Ensure the Designated Teacher is given sufficient time, resources and authority to carry out their responsibilities.
- Monitor the educational outcomes of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promote policies and practices that support inclusion and raise attainment.
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory expectations.

5.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role.
- Promote high aspirations and expectations for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Ensure school staff receive training and guidance where appropriate.
- Monitor attendance, progress, wellbeing and inclusion.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly.

5.3 The Designated Teacher

Leadership Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will:

- Act as the main point of contact for all matters relating to looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Promote a whole-school culture that values, supports and champions these pupils.
- Work closely with the Virtual School Head and other professionals.
- Raise staff awareness of attachment, trauma and the impact of adverse childhood experiences.
- Provide advice and guidance to staff regarding effective strategies and support.
- Support carers and families to establish positive home-school relationships.
- Ensure school policies consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to address safeguarding concerns.

Educational Achievement

The Designated Teacher will:

- Monitor academic progress, attendance and engagement.
- Ensure barriers to learning are identified and addressed.
- Promote high expectations and ambitious outcomes.
- Support access to enrichment, extracurricular opportunities and leadership roles.

- Ensure effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding.
- Monitor the impact of interventions and provision.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

The Designated Teacher will:

- Lead and coordinate the development and review of PEPs.
- Ensure pupils contribute to their PEP wherever appropriate.
- Establish clear and measurable targets.
- Monitor progress against agreed outcomes.
- Ensure actions identified within PEPs are implemented.
- Share updated PEPs with relevant professionals before statutory reviews.
- Support smooth transitions when pupils move schools.

Attendance and Inclusion

The Designated Teacher will:

- Monitor attendance closely.
- Work proactively to prevent persistent absence.
- Ensure pupils are fully included in school life.
- Promote participation in educational visits, clubs and enrichment activities.
- Support pupils during key transition periods.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Designated Teacher will:

- Work closely with the SENCo to identify and support additional needs.
- Ensure SEND procedures are implemented appropriately.
- Consider the interaction between attachment, trauma and learning needs.
- Ensure PEPs complement any Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Support access to specialist advice and assessment where needed.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Designated Teacher will:

- Monitor emotional wellbeing and resilience.
- Ensure staff understand indicators of emotional distress.
- Support access to internal and external mental health services.
- Promote a nurturing, trauma-informed approach throughout the school.
- Use Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs), where appropriate, to inform planning and intervention.

5.4 Working with Parents, Carers and Professionals

The Designated Teacher will:

- Develop positive relationships with carers, adoptive parents and guardians.
- Work collaboratively with social workers, Virtual School Heads and external agencies.
- Ensure communication arrangements are clear and appropriate.
- Support families in understanding available educational support.
- Seek parental consent before discussing previously looked-after children with the Virtual School where required.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained appropriately.

5.5 Exclusions

The school recognises that looked-after and previously looked-after children may be particularly vulnerable to exclusion.

Where exclusion is being considered:

- The Designated Teacher will be informed immediately.
- The Virtual School Head will be contacted as early as possible for looked-after children.
- Alternative strategies and support will be explored before exclusion is considered.
- Any decision will take account of statutory guidance and individual circumstances.

6. Training

The Designated Teacher will:

- Undertake appropriate training to fulfil the role.
- Keep up to date with statutory guidance and best practice.
- Share relevant information and training with staff.

Staff will receive training and guidance appropriate to their role and responsibilities to ensure they understand:

- Attachment and trauma-informed practice.
- The educational needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Effective strategies to promote inclusion, engagement and achievement.

7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school will:

- Respect the confidentiality of children, families and carers.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis and in line with GDPR and safeguarding responsibilities.

- Ensure staff understand appropriate protocols relating to information sharing.

8. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will receive regular updates regarding the progress and outcomes of looked-after and previously looked-after children while maintaining confidentiality.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Designated Teacher and approved by the Governing Body.

9. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Designated Teacher: Sarah Foster
Headteacher: Susie Arnold