

Designated Teacher Policy

Adopted Date:	01/09/2026
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Equality and Inclusion Statement

Apex Specialist Education and all learning centres are committed to equality, inclusion, belonging and respect. This statement applies to every school policy and guides our work across all learning centres.

We promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and work to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, we provide an inclusive education that enables all pupils to participate fully, overcome barriers, develop their potential and achieve positive outcomes.

We recognise diversity as a strength to be respected, celebrated and reflected throughout school life. We strive to ensure everyone feels safe, valued, represented and that they belong. This commitment informs our governance, leadership, safeguarding, curriculum, provision and practice.

Our Commitment:

We are committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Putting our Commitment into Practice:

The Proprietor, Governing Board and Leadership Team will:

- Consider equality implications and the impact of decisions, policies and practice on people with protected characteristics.
- Embed equality, accessibility and inclusion in the development and review of curriculum, provision and policies.
- Identify and seek to reduce or remove barriers to participation, learning, attendance, wellbeing and engagement.
- Promote belonging, positive relationships and high aspirations, particularly for pupils experiencing disadvantage or additional barriers.
- Respond to prejudice-based and discriminatory behaviour, including through safeguarding procedures where relevant.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of equality and inclusion across all learning centres.

Our commitment encompasses the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

All members of our school community share responsibility for upholding equality, inclusion, belonging and respect in their conduct, relationships and implementation of school policies.

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1. Aims and Scope

The school will promote the educational achievement, wellbeing and participation of looked-after and previously looked-after children. Support will build on each child's strengths, aspirations and interests while addressing barriers caused by disrupted education, loss, trauma, discrimination or unmet needs.

The designated teacher will coordinate educational support, advise colleagues and work with pupils, families, carers, social workers and Virtual School Heads. All staff remain responsible for the quality of teaching, relationships and safeguarding provided to these pupils.

These arrangements also inform support for other care-experienced pupils and children in kinship care. Their legal status and eligibility for particular services or funding must be checked individually; kinship care does not automatically mean a child is looked after or previously looked after.

2. Legislation and Guidance

As an independent school, Healey must meet the Independent School Standards, including requirements relating to education, safeguarding, welfare and leadership, and have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. KCSIE expects an appropriately trained teacher in independent schools to lead support for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The statutory designated-teacher appointment duty under section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 applies to maintained schools, with requirements applying to academies through their funding agreements. The school uses the DfE designated-teacher guidance as the framework for its own arrangements, without describing that maintained-school duty as directly applicable to Healey.

Relevant legislation and guidance also include the Children Act 1989, Children and Social Work Act 2017, Equality Act 2010, applicable data-protection law, the SEND Code of Practice and DfE guidance on promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children. The school works with local authorities to deliver the provision agreed for individual pupils, including provision specified in EHC plans.

The current Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and non-association independent school inspection toolkit inform evaluation of the impact of this policy. They do not replace the school's legal duties or the local authority's care-planning responsibilities.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children are children 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, within the relevant statutory definition.

Previously looked-after children include children who ceased to be looked after in England or Wales because of an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order specifying with whom they live. They also include children adopted from state care outside

England and Wales. State care includes care provided by a public authority, religious organisation or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society, where the child would not otherwise have been adequately cared for.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is the education component of a looked-after child's care plan. It records educational needs, provision, targets, responsibilities and progress. The school contributes to it with the child, social worker, carers and virtual school.

A Virtual School Head (VSH) leads the local authority's work to promote the education of children it looks after and provides advice relating to previously looked-after children. The responsible authority may differ from the authority in which the child's centre is located.

4. Our Designated Teacher

The designated teacher is Robert Cochrane, Headteacher, with responsibility across all three centres.

Contact: robert.cochrane@apex-specialisteducation.com or 07727 147 949. Families may also ask the centre office to arrange contact.

Robert is the initial contact for matters covered by this policy. The Headteacher will ensure that an appropriately briefed colleague covers urgent work during absence and that families and professionals know who is providing cover.

Callan Glean remains the whole-school Designated Safeguarding Lead and overall safeguarding coordinator. The designated teacher works closely with Callan and the centre safeguarding leads. Educational coordination does not replace safeguarding reporting or transfer the social worker's responsibilities to the school.

5. Leadership and Staff Responsibilities

The proprietor will ensure that the designated teacher has the time, authority, training and resources needed to carry out the role. The Governing Board will review the effectiveness of support and challenge delays, gaps in provision or unequal outcomes.

The designated teacher will:

- maintain an accurate understanding of pupils' care status, responsible authorities and key professional contacts;
- lead school contributions to PEPs and track implementation and impact;
- advise teachers and Heads of Centre about educational, relational and pastoral needs;
- promote high aspirations and ensure pupils can take part in the wider life of the school;
- work with the SENCO and DSL so education, health, care and safeguarding plans are coordinated;
- undertake relevant professional development, including opportunities provided by virtual schools;
- contribute to policy reviews, including admissions, attendance, behaviour, suspension and

anti-bullying arrangements; and

- report on effectiveness to leaders and governors without unnecessary identification of pupils.

Heads of Centre will ensure agreed support happens in daily practice and that changes in attendance, progress or wellbeing are reported promptly. Teachers will adapt teaching, assess learning and implement agreed interventions. Staff must not assume that care experience explains every difficulty or that all care-experienced children have identical needs.

6. Supporting Looked after Children and Personal Education Plans

On admission or notification that a pupil has entered care, the designated teacher will contact the social worker and responsible virtual school promptly. They will obtain the current PEP and education records, clarify review dates and identify any immediate provision needed. Support must begin while missing information is pursued.

The designated teacher leads the school's contribution to developing and implementing the PEP. The local authority and social worker retain responsibility for care planning. School staff will participate in the authority's process and escalate a missing or overdue PEP to the social worker and VSH.

The PEP should identify:

- the child's views, interests, strengths and aspirations, using accessible communication;
- attainment, progress, attendance and participation, including any gaps in education;
- specific educational targets with clear actions, owners and review dates;
- teaching, intervention, SEND and wellbeing support, including links to the EHC plan;
- how agreed additional funding or services will address identified needs;
- access to activities, careers guidance and preparation for the next stage; and
- evidence of the impact of previous actions and any outstanding barriers.

As a school commitment, progress against the PEP will be formally reviewed at least termly, alongside the responsible authority's requirements, and sooner where needs or placements change. The designated teacher will ensure the PEP is updated before the statutory care-plan review and supplied securely to the social worker and virtual school in time to inform it.

Between reviews, teachers will monitor whether agreed provision is delivered and whether the pupil is making progress. Where an action is delayed or ineffective, the designated teacher will agree corrective action with the relevant professional, identify who will do it and set a timescale. Unresolved concerns will be escalated to the VSH, social worker and, where appropriate, Independent Reviewing Officer.

The school will contribute relevant observations to assessments of emotional wellbeing, including Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires where requested and appropriate. Staff will work with the responsible professionals; a questionnaire score does not replace clinical assessment or a safeguarding response.

7. Supporting Previously Looked after Children

The designated teacher will offer a confidential and accessible point of contact for parents and guardians. Families will be invited to share relevant history and evidence of eligibility voluntarily and sensitively, without requiring a child to disclose personal experiences to classmates or unnecessary staff.

A previously looked-after child does not automatically require a statutory PEP or have a social worker. The school will agree an appropriate education or support plan with the family where needed, coordinate it with any EHC or healthcare plan and review its impact.

The designated teacher will seek individual advice from the VSH with the agreement of the parent or guardian, subject to the separate requirement to share information where necessary to safeguard a child. Families will be involved in decisions about support, assessment and transitions.

8. Teaching SEND Wellbeing and Attendance

Teachers will provide an ambitious curriculum and assess each pupil's learning accurately. They will use accessible explanations, predictable routines, supportive relationships and suitable adjustments to homework, assessment and classroom participation.

The designated teacher and SENCO will check that PEP and EHC outcomes complement one another and that specified provision is delivered. Possible additional SEND or mental health needs will be explored with families and relevant professionals rather than attributed solely to care experience.

Staff will respond sensitively to separation, bereavement, identity and family-related curriculum work. Pupils will have a trusted adult and a safe way to seek support. Anti-bullying action will include bullying connected with care status or family circumstances.

Attendance will be monitored closely. Unexplained absence will trigger prompt enquiries and the agreed contact and safeguarding arrangements with carers, social workers and the virtual school. Staff must not wait for a PEP meeting to address a concern. Support will consider transport, placement changes, health and relationships as well as classroom experience.

9. Funding and Additional Support

The designated teacher will discuss with the VSH and commissioning authority how pupil premium plus and other available resources can support agreed outcomes. Funding is not assumed to be an automatic personal allocation paid directly to this independent school.

Under the 2026–2027 pupil premium arrangements, local authorities receive funding for eligible pupils in independent settings where they pay full tuition fees. They may allocate funding to the setting or arrange additional support themselves and must consult the setting about its use. The school will confirm eligibility, the responsible funding body and the agreed arrangements for each pupil, including previously looked-after pupils.

Any funding received will be recorded, used for its agreed purpose and evaluated against pupil

outcomes. The designated teacher will involve carers or parents appropriately and distinguish additional support from provision already funded through placement fees or an EHC plan. Essential provision must not be withheld while a funding query is resolved.

10. Working with Families and Other Professionals

The school will establish who holds parental responsibility, who may make particular decisions, and any delegated authority or court restrictions. Staff will clarify who can consent to visits, medical treatment or other activities rather than assuming that every carer holds the same authority.

The designated teacher will agree practical communication arrangements with carers, parents, social workers and the virtual school. Relevant policies and key contacts will be shared in an accessible format. Engagement with birth parents will follow the child's care arrangements and professional advice.

The school will contribute education information to professional reviews and raise concerns about delayed support. The child's wishes will be heard and recorded, including where adults disagree about the best approach.

11. Transitions and Risks to Placement Stability

Admissions, moves between centres and transfers to another school or college will be planned with the child and relevant adults. The school will share current plans securely, arrange a named receiving contact and check that essential provision can continue. Careers and post-16 planning will begin early and reflect the pupil's aspirations.

If a pupil's behaviour places their school placement at risk, the designated teacher will involve the VSH and social worker promptly for a looked-after child. For a previously looked-after child, the school will work with parents or guardians and seek VSH advice with their agreement. This does not delay necessary safeguarding action.

Leaders will review adjustments, unmet needs, the pupil's plans and additional support before deciding that a placement cannot continue. Any suspension or ending of placement will follow the school's policy, applicable law and commissioning arrangements. Staff must not use informal exclusion or pressure carers to remove a pupil to avoid these procedures.

12. Records Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Care status, court orders, PEPs and family history will be held securely with access limited to those who need information for their role. Staff will receive the practical information needed to support and protect the pupil without unnecessary disclosure of sensitive history.

Information will be accurate, relevant and shared securely in accordance with applicable data-protection law and safeguarding requirements. Decisions and reasons for significant sharing will be recorded. Consent is not a prerequisite where another lawful basis permits or requires sharing to protect a child.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately through the school's safeguarding arrangements. Staff must not wait for the designated teacher or a scheduled review where a child may be at risk.

13. Monitoring Complaints and Review

The designated teacher will report at least annually to the Governing Board on educational progress, attendance, participation, PEP quality, delivery of support, transitions, training and use of additional funding. Small-cohort reporting will protect confidentiality. Leaders will seek pupil and family feedback and act on identified gaps.

Concerns about support should be raised with the designated teacher or Headteacher.

Complaints, including those about the Headteacher, follow the published Complaints Policy. A complaint does not suspend necessary support or safeguarding action.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following changes in guidance, significant incidents or evidence that arrangements are ineffective.

14. References and Related Policies

Guidance and legal position checked on 1 October 2026. Read the sources according to their stated scope; maintained-school duties are distinguished from the school's own commitments in this policy.

- [DfE Designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children 2018](#)
- [DfE Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children](#)
- [DfE Pupil premium conditions of grant 2026 to 2027 updated September 2026](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [DfE Keeping children safe in education 2026](#)
- [DfE Independent school standards guidance April 2026](#)
- [Ofsted Education inspection framework](#)
- [Ofsted Independent school inspection toolkit and guidance for September 2026](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

Related school policies: Safeguarding and Child Protection; SEND; Admissions; Attendance; Behaviour; Suspension; Anti-Bullying; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; Data Protection; Complaints.

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