



# ManorAcademy

## Designated Teacher for Looked After Children Policy

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Signed:  	
Neil Melton Chair of Governors	Katrina Kerry Headteacher

<b>DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE</b>	Helen Austin
<b>DESIGNATED PERSON FOR CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY IN CARE</b>	Helen Austin
<b>HEADTEACHER</b>	Katrina Kerry
<b>DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED CHILDREN</b>	Katie Gosling

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### 1. Introduction

Our vision is for all of our students, regardless of background and circumstance, to make outstanding progress and achieve grades which will open the door to the future of their choice. We want our students to be curious and develop a thirst for knowledge; we want them to be resilient and to value effort; we want them to understand that sometimes failure is an essential part of the learning process and to recognise that developing a positive, ‘can do’ attitude will help them to set and achieve aspirational goals.

#### 1.1 Definitions

##### Definitions: ‘Looked after children’ (LAC)

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

The term ‘in care’ refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘accommodated’ by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be ‘looked after children’ - LAC.

##### Definitions: ‘Previously looked after children’ (PLAC)

The February 2018 guidance stated that: ‘a previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales’.

## 1.2 Designated Teacher

Following amendments made by the 2017 Act, section 20A of the 2008 Act and Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 various duties were placed on the governing body of a maintained school in England and the proprietor of an academy in England. Therefore, we will:

- Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales;
- Ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training; and
- Ensure they and the designated teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

We understand that the Secretary of State has the power to make regulations to prescribe the necessary qualifications or experience of the designated member of staff for previously looked after children.

### Eligibility

The Designated Teacher will satisfy themselves that a child is eligible for support by asking the child's parents for evidence of their previously looked after status. For children adopted outside England and Wales, the child must have been looked after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, designated teachers will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, designated teachers could discuss eligibility with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to agree a consistent approach.

## 1.3 Why looked after and previously looked after children need the support of a designated teacher?

We recognise that, nationally, there is educational underachievement of looked after children, when compared with their peers, and we are committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance, "The roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children" and "The Children and Young Persons Act 2008", also the "Designated Teacher (looked after children etc.) (England) Regulation 2009". Also, the guidance of "Improving the attainment of looked after young people in Secondary Schools". The Children Act places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential".

We will be guided by the 'Improving Attainment Guidance' which recognises the collective responsibility of Local Authorities and schools to support looked after young people by setting out these principles:

- Doing the things they do for all young people but more so
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge
- Skilfully linking each young person to a key person they relate well to
- Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships
- Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies
- Making things happen and seeing things through
- Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility
- Actively extending the horizons of each young person
- Planning for future transitions

We recognise that many looked after and previously looked after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.

The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning. We recognise that the support that our school and designated teachers give to children who are looked after and previously looked after should not be seen in isolation. All looked after and previously looked after children will have a wide range of support mechanisms that will assist in promoting their educational achievement. The child's foster carer (or residential care worker), social worker or, for previously looked after children, parents or guardian, will have day-to-day responsibilities for the child. Within the local authority, the VSH will provide more strategic support or advice and information for both the child and the school.

## **2. Aims of the Policy**

**The Manor Academy will champion the individual needs of all care-experienced children enabling them to learn, aspire, thrive and achieve their maximum potential.**

This will be achieved by:

- Placing the highest priority on their education
- Promoting regular attendance
- Having high expectations and aspirations
- Promoting access and inclusion in all areas of school life
- Promoting stability and continuity
- Supporting early intervention
- Valuing the voice of the child
- Promoting social, emotional and mental health and well-being
- Working in partnership with parents, carers, social workers and other professionals

### **2.1 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
- The Manor Academy will meet the needs of care-experienced children through effective liaison and integrated work with all key partners including relevant Virtual Schools

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Head Teacher and Governing Body**

We, the Headteacher and Governing Body of The Manor Academy are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for all care-experienced children. We will ensure that the Designated Teacher for children in care has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority and sufficient time and experience to fulfil this statutory role.

A named governor will be nominated to link with the Designated Teacher and all governors will be fully aware of the statutory guidance for care-experienced children.

The Head Teacher and nominated governor will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all care-experienced children make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff have relevant skills, knowledge and understanding.

Regular communication between the Head Teacher and Governing Body and the Designated Teacher 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 The Manor Academy.

#### **3.2 Designated Teacher for Children in Care (DT) and Designated Person for Children previously in Care (DP)**

Our Designated Teacher and Designated Person of The Manor Academy will:

- Have a full understanding of relevant statutory guidance and attend relevant training as required
- Have a lead responsibility in promoting and raising the educational achievement of every care-experienced child on the school roll
- The Designated Teacher may delegate support for LAC students to identified Key Workers within the school
- Ensure every child in care has a high quality up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP) and regularly monitor the progress towards desirable outcomes
- Monitor the effective spend of the pupil premium plus grant to maximise educational outcomes for children in care
- Ensure the social, emotional, mental health and well-being needs of care-experienced children are recognised and prioritised
- Take the lead responsibility for helping all school staff to understand the factors that can affect how care-experienced children learn and achieve, any barriers they might face and the impact of trauma and poor attachments
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and individuals in relation to care-experienced children
- Share confidential and personal information on a need to know basis only
- Actively encourage and promote home learning and extra-curricular activities
- Recognise the impact of transition and plan accordingly

The designated teacher will take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked after and previously looked after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these children. The designated teacher will carry out 'The role of the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children' as outlined within the statutory guidance published in February 2018.

### 3.3 The Manor Academy School staff

Our staff will ensure their part in embedding a ‘care-experienced children friendly culture’ which is attachment-aware and trauma-informed. This may include attending training, referring to the Designated Teacher for advice and sharing accurate information and data with the Designated Teacher.

All staff will be aware of who LAC students are within their classes.

Our staff will hold high expectations of and aspirations for care-experienced children.

### 3.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have details of the student’s social worker and the name of the virtual head. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with the designated teacher as we recognise that students may have been abused or neglected before becoming looked after and we need to ensure their on-going safety as well as supporting their education and development by linking with the designated safeguarding lead, their social worker and parents where appropriate.

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Governor for Student Protection	Katherine Gosling	01623 425100
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Helen Austin	01623 425100
Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead	Katrina Kerry	01623 425100
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Louise Meredith	01623 425100
Designated Safeguarding Officers	Jade Redfern Emma Rawson Kelly Nettleship Kim Best Lisa Firman Nichola Barsby	01623 425100
LA Student Protection Contact/LADO	Eva Callaghan or covering LADO	0115 977 3921
MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub)	Duty Officer	0300 500 8090

## 4. Policies and Procedures

### 4.1 Staff Development and Training

We, the Head Teacher and Governing Body will ensure that the Designated Teacher and Designated Person are trained for the role when they come to post and will continue to support them to access ongoing professional development pertinent to the role. All staff are encouraged to participate in training that will enable them to meet the needs of care-experienced children more effectively and the Designated Teacher will raise awareness of typical issues and barriers for these children at a whole school level.

### 4.2 Admissions

In line with national guidance, The Manor Academy prioritises the admission of care-experienced children.

The importance of a thorough and planned transition is recognised and this may include:

- Transition meetings between schools
- The swift transfer of information between schools
- Additional school visits and identification of staff mentor and/or peer buddy
- Additional support and planning for care-experienced children at times of transition
- Structured activities to ‘say goodbye’, in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

### **4.3 Attendance and Punctuality**

School attendance procedures will reflect the specific needs of care-experienced children. This may include reasonable adjustments such as celebrating 100% attendance despite incidents of non-attendance due to care placement moves.

Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, The Manor Academy will speak to the child, carer/parent, social worker and other relevant professionals including the Virtual School where a child is in care.

### **4.4 Exclusions**

The Manor Academy will make every effort to avoid excluding a care-experienced child, in recognition of the impact of their early experiences and what their behaviour may have been communicating. We also recognise there may be increased risk of disengagement from school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss.

If the child is in care, before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the relevant Virtual School. The Virtual School may be contacted for advice if the child was previously in care, with consent from the carers / parents. If there is no option other than exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the exclusion and ensure that educational provision is in place from day one (for children in care). Exclusion will not be used as a sanction, but instead will be used to plan successful access, inclusion and reintegration.

### **4.5 Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)**

Where a care experienced child is allocated pupil premium plus, it is to be used for the benefit of their educational needs. The Manor Academy will ensure that:

- The allocation of PP+ promotes high aspirations and seeks to secure the best educational outcomes
- The extra funding provided by the PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by CYP in care
- For children in care, the allocation of PP+ will be linked to clear desirable outcomes as identified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

## **5. Nottinghamshire Virtual School**

Telephone: 0115 804 4677

Email: [virtualschooladvice@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschooladvice@nottscc.gov.uk)

Other Virtual School contact details can be obtained by contacting the Nottinghamshire Virtual School.