East Midlands Academy Trust

Designated Teacher Policy for Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

Scope: East Midlands Academy Trust & Academies within the Trust	
Version: V6	**Filename:** EMAT Designated Teacher Policy for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
Approval: September 2026 Approved by the Trust Board	**Next Review: August 2027** This Policy will be reviewed by the owner and approved by the Full Trust Board annually
Owner: EMAT Head of Inclusion	**Union Status:** Not Applicable

Policy type:	
Statutory	Replaces Academy's current policy

Revision History

RevisionDate	Revisor	Description of Revision
August 2026 – v6	J Nimmo	Reference to kinship care
July 2025 – v5	J Nimmo	Updated policy title. Definitions clarified. VSH responsibilities detailed and further detail on PEP included.
July 2024 – v4	R Ryan	Reference to CLA. Approval moved to Full TB.
June 2022 – V3	M Juan	Policy review – No Changes
July 2021– V2	M Juan	Policy review – No Changes
September 2020 – v1	M Juan	New EMAT Designated LAC Teacher Policy issued to all schools

EMAT Designated CLA Teacher Policy

1. Aims

East Midlands Academy Trust aims to ensure that:

- A member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children in each of its academies
- The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
- Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for

2. 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.

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

- section 2E of the Academies Act 2010.
- Children Act 1989
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2024) `Keeping Children Safe in Education`
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2024) 'Suspensions and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust and academy Policies and documents:

- EMAT Admissions Policy
- EMAT Anti Bullying Policy
- EMAT Equality Policy
- EMAT SEND Policy
- EMAT Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions & Administering Medication Policy
- Individual Academy Behaviour and Pupil Premium Policies

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

3. Definitions

Looked-after children are registered pupils that are:

"Children Looked-after (CLA)" are defined as children who:

- Are provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours under the Children Act 1989, sections 20 and 21.
- Are subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989, part 4.
- Are subject to a placement order.
- Are subject to kinship care

Previously looked-after children are registered pupils 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 arrangements order, which includes arrangements relating to who the child lives with and when they are to live with them
    - A special guardianship or kinship care arrangement
    - An adoption order
- They appear to the trust board 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

4. The Virtual Headteacher

Each Local Authority appoints a Virtual Headteacher (VH). The core purpose of the VH is to be rigorous in driving up improvements in the educational progress and attainment of all Children Looked After (CLA), including those that have been placed in schools in other Local Authority areas. They also have an important role in working in partnership with other Local Authority VHs and School Headteachers to support the educational progress of children who are in their local authority schools but looked after by other Local Authorities.

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Because CLA are being educated across a large number of schools, the VH has a powerful role in tracking their progress as if they were in a single school. This is carried out through:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; this includes children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders, or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of the authority's CLA, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational attainment and progress of CLA as if those children attended a single school.

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to CLA and Post CLA children.
- Working with each school and academy where CLA/PLAC are placed to ensure pupils attend and are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for CLA.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of CLA and PCLA as effectively as possible.
- Monitoring individual Academy's allocation of pupil premium plus (PP+) for CLA.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to maintain an up-to-date roll of the CLA and PLAC who are in academy settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the Headteacher and Designated Teacher (DT) if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure sufficient information about a pupil's mental health, SEN or disability is available to the school so that appropriate support can be provided.
- Ensure social workers, academies, DTs, careers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's Personal Education Plan (PEP). • Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CLA.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision, including special educational provision, and unplanned termination of educational arrangements through proactive, multi-agency co operation.
- Ensure the education achievement of CLA is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and academy attendance of CLA through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All CLA must have a care plan and PEP as a regulatory mandate under the Children Act 1989 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.

EMAT understand that PEPs are intended to serve as an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential in all areas of school life. Wherever a pupil is placed at a school or academy, it is the responsibility of a pupil's social worker, supported by the placed authority's VSH, to initiate a PEP and arrange to meet with the school's DT and the pupil's carer.

EMAT academies will ensure that children's PEPs reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of each pupil and will be reviewed termly. The DT will liaise with the VSH and social workers to share information and act as the in-school lead on how the PEP is developed and utilised to make sure that pupil's progress towards education targets is monitored. Each academy, in collaboration with the pupil, carer, and other named professionals (eg – social workers) will collaborate to ensure completion of the PEP. The DT at each academy will ensure

that the PEP is used as a working document intended to support the pupil's educational needs, raise their aspirations, and improve their life chances.

Individual EMAT academies will ensure that:

- They work with allocated VSHs, Social Workers and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the pupil's PEP are implemented without delay.
- Have awareness that Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is issued for LAC and PLAC pupils (Reception to Year 11). The funds will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the attended school, and the DT will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of the cohort of CLA, or PCLA, and according to their needs. The DT will communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the pupil's educational attainment and progress.

The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:

- [Primary academies only] access to nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with their work.
- Suitable education provided by the LA, where the child is not in academy because of suspension or exclusion.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new academy.
- Targeted attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- The VSH and the designated teacher will ensure that the impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding is recorded, within the PEP process.

The DT will facilitate support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes: -

- Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications. -Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
- Out-of-academy hours learning activities. The VSH and the DT will ensure that information is included within a CLA pupil's PEP, surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.
- Any interventions supported by Pupil Premium+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the pupil.

6. The Designated Teacher

At Chacombe CofE Academy our designated teacher is **Natalie Coates**

You can contact them by Natalie.coates@chacombe.emat.uk

The Executive Headteacher/Head teacher at each EMAT academy has the responsibility of appointing the designated teacher for CLA and PCLA and ensuring the individual appointed for each academy is appropriately trained, and training is cascaded.

The DT must be apportioned time and resources to succeed in carrying out their duties.

It should be noted that:

"*Not all aspects of the role of the designated teacher need necessarily be carried out by a single individual or by a qualified teacher. While lead responsibility for raising attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children on roll must rest with the designated teacher, schools will need to decide how functions within it, including pastoral and administrative tasks, are most appropriately delegated to suit their own circumstances." (Page 8, The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (DfE, 2018).*

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

Other members of staff who have particular responsibilities in relation to looked-after and previously looked-after children are:

Luci Clapton, Executive Head Teacher – luci.clapton@central.emat.uk

5. Role of the designated teacher

The designated teacher should be a central point of initial contact within individual academies. This helps to make sure that individual academies play their roles to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning.

Leadership responsibilities

The designated teacher will:

- Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving CLA and PLAC.
- Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by:
    - Working with VSHs
    - Promoting a whole school culture where the needs of designated pupils matter and are prioritised

  Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
    - The factors which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
    - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of CLA and PLAC pupils.
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Promote a culture in which looked-after and previously looked-after children are encouraged and supported to engage with their education and other school activities
- Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Work directly with looked-after and previously looked-after children and their carers, parents and guardians to promote good home-school links, support progress and encourage high aspirations
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs

- Work closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Involve parents, guardians, and kinship carers of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that the DT understands the support available to CLA and PLAC.
- Ensuring CLA are involved in setting their own targets.
- Advising staff on teaching strategies for CLA. And PCLA to meet individual needs and liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.

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 child'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 child 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 school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils
- 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 child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan

For transition periods, ensure that a looked-after child's PEP 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 school 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
- Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium+ funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- Encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how pupil premium+ 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 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 work with the SENCO to ensure that 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 school can draw on specialist services; involving the DSL if appropriate.
- Put in place robust arrangements to have strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) 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 school

The designated teacher will:

- Proactively engage with social workers and other professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Discuss with social workers and the DSL how the school should engage with birth parents, and ensure the school 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 school works with others outside of the school 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
- Talking to the child's social worker and/or other relevant parties in the local authority regarding any decisions about changes in care placements which will disrupt the child'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

- Seek 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 school works in partnership with the child's carer and other professionals, such as their social worker, in order to review and develop educational progress
  - School 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 suspension or exclusion an academy will:
  - Contact the VH and social worker as soon as possible so they can help the academy decide how to best support the pupil to address their behaviour to avoid suspension or exclusion becoming necessary wherever possible
  - Working with the VH, social worker and child's carers, consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to address the triggers and causes of the pupils 's behaviour
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of suspension or exclusion, talk to the child's parents or guardians and social worker (if applicable) before seeking advice from the VH on avoiding suspension or exclusion. Exclusion will only ever be used as a last resort, academy, all considerations by academy staff will be made to prevent suspension or exclusion, suitable arrangements will be put into place to support an individual pupil's education in the event of suspension or exclusion.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board.

The Local Advisory Board is responsible for the monitoring and implementation of this policy.