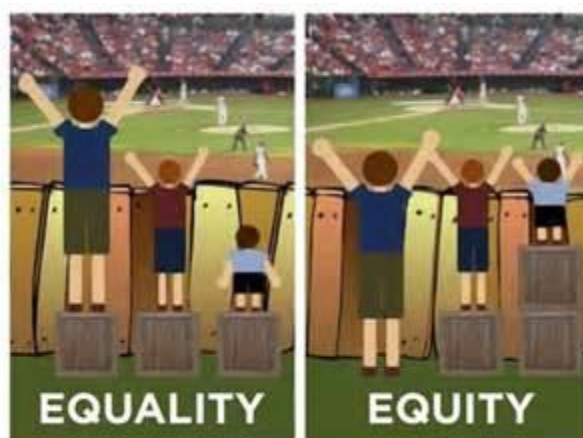


DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN HANDBOOK

2026/27



South Gloucestershire
Handbook for the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
and Previously Looked After Children

Index

1	Introduction	Page 3
2	Legal Framework: Designated Teacher: Looked After Children	Page 4
3	Legal Framework: Designated Teacher - Roles and Responsibilities	Page 4
4	Success Indicators for the School and the Designated Teacher	Page 6
5	Effective Schools and Looked After Children	Page 6
6	Legal Framework: Independent Reviewing Officer - Roles and Responsibilities	Page 7
7	The Role of the Virtual School Team	Page 8
8	Statutory Responsibilities for Governors: Looked After Children	Page 10
9	Personal Education Plans (PEP): Overview	Page 11
10	Personal Education Plans (PEP): Requirements	Page 12
11	Pupil Premium Funding	Page 14
12	Monitoring Progress	Page 15
13	Exclusions	Page 15

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Checklist for the Designated Teachers for Looked After Children Appendix 2: Governor Report: Looked After Children Appendix 3: Useful Resources and External Organisations	
--	--

Link to South Gloucestershire Virtual School Documents:

[Guidance for schools and education settings | SafeguardingSouth Gloucestershire Safeguarding \(southglos.gov.uk\)](https://southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-schools-education-settings)

This Handbook is designed to provide guidance and information for the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children in all schools in South Gloucestershire.

The role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children has become increasingly important over time, particularly as there is growing recognition of the significant challenges which face the children who are in public care. There is also a greater acknowledgement of the important role that schools play in the lives of the looked after children and the impact that a school can have in helping to secure better outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children.

The Handbook describes the statutory responsibilities for schools for children who are in the care of the local authority as well as the role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children in school. However, the Handbook is designed to be a useful resource for all staff in school as well as the Designated Teacher. It is hoped that the Handbook will also be useful for Chairs of Governors as well as the Designated Governor for Looked After Children.

South Gloucestershire Council is ambitious for all the children who are in the care of the local authority. The vision for the South Gloucestershire Corporate Parenting Strategy states:

- To be the very best Corporate Parents we can be for children and young people in our care
- For our central standard to remain **“Would this be good enough for my child?”**

This Handbook outlines the expectations that South Gloucestershire Council has for the education of all the children who are in the care of the Council and provides guidance and information for schools to ensure that they can provide the best education for the children.

The Handbook also outlines the role of the Virtual School for children who are in the care of South Gloucestershire Council and the support which is currently available to schools from the Virtual School Team.

Please do get in touch if you would like additional information or have any comments or queries. We are very keen that the Handbook is useful and helps to cover what you need to know to help you and your school in this very important work.

Steve Claypoole
Head of South Gloucestershire Virtual School
September 2025

The Legal Framework: Looked After Children

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires the governing body of a maintained school to designate a member of staff (the 'designated teacher') to have responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children who are registered pupils at the school.

Definition of a Looked After Child - The Children Act 1989

A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she:

- has been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours;
- is subject to a Care Order;
- Is subject to a Placement Order.

There are a number of reasons why a child may become looked after:

- family breakdown or crisis;
- family in need of support;
- significant harm, abuse or neglect.

The legal basis for a child becoming looked after will be through one of the following routes:

- Voluntary accommodation – Section 20;
- Interim Care Order – Section 31;
- Care Order – Section 31;
- Placement Order – Section 21.

The Legal Framework: Designated Teacher – Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body must ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training. The designated teacher must be a qualified teacher, a headteacher or acting head teacher at the school. Through their funding agreements, designated teacher requirements apply to academies and free schools.

The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional, and academic needs are prioritised.

The designated teacher leads on how the Personal Education Plan (PEP) is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored. However, in order to achieve this effectively, the role entails a much wider range of responsibilities and functions, as outlined in more detail below.

The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how looked after children learn and achieve. This work will ensure that everyone involved in helping looked after children achieve understand that in order to do this they need to:

- have high expectations of looked after children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- be aware of the emotional, psychological, and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some

children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences.

- understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children, but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child can achieve.
- understand how important it is to see looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers.
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status.
- appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential.
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, the Virtual School Headteacher and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child.

In promoting the educational achievement of looked after pupils the designated teacher should:

- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put looked after children at a disadvantage.
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that effective and well understood school procedures are in place to support a looked after child's learning. Particular account should be taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what he or she can achieve.
- promote a culture in which looked after children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education.
- promote a culture in which looked after children can discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
- be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked after.
- make sure the school makes use of a wide range of approaches to assessment to improve the short- and medium-term progress of looked after children and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there.
- make sure that looked after children benefit from the use of the allotted pupil premium funding and are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and access to academic focused study support.
- promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers
- make sure that carers understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home.
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within school in partnership with others as necessary.

Most importantly, the designated teacher is the child's champion in school and the first point of contact for school colleagues, carers, and social workers regarding anything to do with the child's education.

Success Indicators for the School and the Designated Teacher

Success Indicators

Indicators which demonstrate that the role of the Designated Teacher is being implemented efficiently and is making a real difference include ensuring that:

- The school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of all looked after children on roll.
- The school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of looked after children and previously looked after children.
- Resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of looked after children and previously looked after children.

Effective Schools and Looked After Children

Effective schools support looked after children by:

1. Doing the things, they do for all children but more so.
2. Ensuring PEP meetings are held at appropriate intervals, within legal guidelines.
3. Ensuring the PEP is always completed to a consistently high standard (see pages 11 and 12).
4. Balancing high levels of support with real challenge.
5. **Skilfully linking each child to a key person, they relate well to.**
6. Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships.
7. Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities, and specialist agencies.
8. Making things happen and seeing actions through.
9. Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility.
10. Actively extending the horizons of each child.
11. Prioritising each child for CIAG/WEX opportunities.
12. Planning for future transitions.

Our aim is that all children in our care make the same or better progress in their learning compared with their peers.

Legal Framework: Independent Reviewing Officer – Roles and Responsibilities

It is a statutory requirement that every Looked After Child has an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The role of the IRO is to provide independent oversight of both the care provided to individual children as well as the local authority's performance as a corporate parent.

The role of the IRO is to ensure that each child/young person's care plan reflects their needs, (emotional and behavioural development, identity, relationships self-care and leisure) their wishes and feelings are understood and taken into account and actions identified to meet these needs are progressed by the "Team Around the Child". Children /young people should know who their IRO is and how to contact them, their IRO will offer to meet with them before the review meeting and will keep in touch between reviews.

Any concerns that the IRO identifies in relation to an individual child's care or in care planning are brought to the attention of senior managers who, as corporate parents for Looked After Children, should respond as any responsible and conscientious parent would respond.

The IRO should "challenge the local authority if care plans are not being progressed and a child/young person's needs are not being met". The IRO will seek resolution firstly through the Dispute Resolution Process and, if concerns remain, the IRO has the power to seek independent legal advice and, if necessary, refer to Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service).

IROs are experienced social workers, confident in both working with children/young people and their families, carers, and professionals and who by virtue of their independence can identify and raise concerns and take action to ensure that children and young people's needs are met.

The key task of the IRO is the chairing of the meeting to review the care plan (generally known as a LAC Review). Reviews take place at set intervals (within 20 working days of becoming looked after or having moved to a new placement - then at 3 months and thereafter at 6 monthly intervals) although the IRO can call a review at any time. A Review should also be held whenever any unplanned change is proposed that would disrupt the child's education or training.

In preparing for the LAC Review the IRO will ensure all the individual plans that contribute to the Care Plan such as the Health Care Plan and the Personal Education Plan (PEP) have been completed and updated to reflect the child/young person's changing needs and that actions have been progressed.

Review meetings are generally small and child-focussed to encourage children/young people's participation and so that they feel that the meeting is genuinely focused on meeting their needs. The IRO will want to meet with the child/young person before any meeting to agree who will attend, the organisation of the review meeting and identify the key issues to be discussed. Frequently reviews are a "process" with the IRO reviewing the information that is available, checking plans and the progress of actions prior to or following the meeting with the child.

Whilst IROs do not have case management responsibility as this is held by the social work team, IROs will liaise with the Team around the Child to promote the child/young person's needs. If the Designated Teacher has any concerns about the care or the progress of the plan for a child/young person then contact should be made with the allocated IRO.

The Role of the Virtual School Team

- The Virtual School is staffed by a team of educational professionals including:
 - the Virtual School Headteacher: **Steve Claypoole**
 - one full-time Lead Teacher for primary and secondary phase looked after children: **Jo Hiam**
 - one full-time Support Teacher for primary and secondary phase looked after children: **Sara Miles**
 - one full-time Support Teacher for primary and secondary phase looked after children: **Paul Tooth**
 - one full-time Post 16 Lead for year 11 transition and post 16 educational support: **Claire McHugh**
 - one part-time Support Teacher for early years and primary phase looked after children: **Nicola Langham**
 - three part-time Educational Psychologist to support the school link EPs and offer training and support to professionals working with looked after children. **Rosalind Keefe, Zoe Byrnes, Ruth Peck**
 - one part-time secondary teacher with responsibility for art as therapy and PEP Quality Assurance: **Judith Collins**
- The Virtual School Team is committed to ensuring that the education of Looked After Children is seen as a priority by everyone who works with them. Team members will act where necessary to promote improvement in educational outcomes for individuals and cohorts and to try to help to address underachievement.
- The Virtual School maintains a roll of all the authority's school age Looked After Children with current information regarding their school placement, attendance and educational progress and performance. This roll is updated routinely each month with individual additions as children come into the care of the local authority.
- The Virtual School Team has strong links with the Looked After Team, the Family Placement Team, and the Adoption Service to promote positive educational outcomes and to help to secure appropriate placements. The Virtual School Team provides educational advice and support to social care. Members liaise closely with social workers to try to ensure that placements help to secure the best educational outcomes for the child. The Virtual School Team liaises with social workers to ensure that there is sufficient consideration of the educational needs of Looked After Children when taking decisions about changing placements.
- The Virtual School Team liaises closely with headteachers and designated teachers providing consultation and support to enhance the educational attainment of the children in the care of the local authority. This includes the provision of induction and training for designated teachers who are new to the role or to any school which has not previously had children who are looked after on its roll. In addition, the Virtual School Team can provide training for schools on an individual teacher, group, or whole staff basis about a wide range of subjects including attachment training or promoting positive behaviour management techniques.

- The Virtual School Team is committed to ensuring that all Looked After Children, have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is of high quality. The team will, where necessary, work with schools to improve the quality of PEPs and to promote faster progress. This will include reviewing the use of the pupil premium, where appropriate, to ensure that its allocation is appropriate and likely to lead to improvement in the child's educational attainment.
- Members of the Virtual School Team will attend meetings at school, including PEP meetings, EPAC meetings and individual pupil meetings, as appropriate. Members of the team can also undertake pupil observations as part of an individual programme designed to improve a child's progress.
- The Virtual School Team supports transition at all phases. Members are available to visit prospective primary or secondary schools - or colleges for post-16 students - to ensure that the child feels well supported through this process.
- Members of the Virtual School Team can provide additional support to signpost activities which can be undertaken with the pupil premium to ensure that the children thrive and achieve their potential. In addition, the Virtual School Team can liaise with social care to ensure that additional resources can be provided or help to arrange additional resources such as one to one tuition, including at home, where needed.
- The Virtual School Team can also work directly with children. Activities include academic visits for secondary students as well as a programme of off-site enrichment activities which include Aim Higher visits to universities.
- The Virtual School Team, in conjunction with the Looked After Team, Adoption Service and Family Placement Team, can provide training for foster carers, adoptive parents and guardians to improve educational outcomes.
- The Virtual School Team monitors the attendance, exclusions, progress, and achievement of Looked After Children each month. Any concerns are raised and followed up with the children, their schools, or social workers.
- The Virtual School Team distributes the Pupil Premium to schools three times a year – on a termly (old) basis and monitors its impact.
- The Virtual School Team is committed to sharing effective practice with colleagues to improve behaviour and attendance, promote improved outcomes and school stability and identify and address barriers to learning.
- The Virtual School Team is committed to ensuring that the achievements of Looked After Children are recognised, acknowledged, and celebrated by everyone working with and for them, including the local authority.
- The Virtual School Team is committed to improving the quality of its provision, so members attend the regional Virtual School network as well as appropriate national events and training. The Team also works closely with neighbouring local authorities to try to ensure access to professional development as well as to facilitate good communication and reciprocal support for any Looked After Children who must cross boundaries.

Statutory Responsibilities for Governors: Looked After Children
--

A child is looked after if:

- The child's parents agree that the child goes into care. This is often referred to a "section 20" **OR**
- The child has been legally removed from their parents without the parent's consent. This is often referred to as a care order.

Governors with the Headteacher must appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked After children who is:

- A qualified senior teacher working at the school as a teacher **OR**
- A Head Teacher or acting Head Teacher

Governors should:

- (Must) Make sure that the Designated Teacher receives appropriate training.
- Consider an annual (minimum) report from the Designated Teacher.
- Work with the Leadership Team to act on issues raised in the report.
- Receive and scrutinise an annual report from the school on the progress of Looked After Children

The Designated Teacher must:

- Promote a culture of high expectation amongst all staff in the school
- Make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets.
- Be a source of advice for staff.
- Prioritise Looked After Children for 1:1 tuition.
- Support carers and communicate regularly with the carers.
- Lead on the development and implementation of each Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Monitor the progress of Looked After Children.
- Monitor the progress of previously Looked After Children
- Produce a report for Governors at least once a year and make sure a copy is sent to the Virtual School.

The report to Governors should cover (see Appendix 6):

- Levels of progress made by Looked After Children.
- Patterns of attendance and exclusions.
- Any issues arising from the Personal Education Plans.
- Impact of PP funding allocation for LAC
- Progress of Looked After Children who are high ability or special educational needs.
- Whole school planning – does this cover Looked After Children?
- Training undertaken by the Designated Teacher
- Work with the Local Authority and multi agencies
- The impact of school policies on Looked After Children.

Governors can obtain full details of these responsibilities from:

The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies, Ref: DCSF-01046-2009. Available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

Personal Education Plan (PEP): Overview

South Gloucestershire Virtual School implemented a new online PEP system in 2021/22 with EGOV Solutions. All PEPs are now on this system.

The statutory guidance emphasises the importance of the PEP in showing how everyone is working together to secure good educational outcomes for the children in the care of South Gloucestershire and that there are clear expectations that the local authority and schools will improve the way that the PEP is used to inform support for each child.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a statutory requirement as part of each child's care plan. The PEP should help everyone to support the personalised education of each child to enable him/her to make good progress.

The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the child's local authority and the school. As part of this, it is of fundamental importance that all involved listen to and take account of the child's wishes and feelings about education and the PEP process.

The responsibility for initiating the PEP lies with the social worker meeting with the school and the carer. The designated teacher leads on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards educational targets is monitored.

The Virtual School Headteacher will only release the termly (old) instalment of the Pupil Premium funding if there is an effective high-quality PEP in place for each child which shows clearly how the additional funding is being used and the impact on the child's progress at school is evaluated.

The new statutory guidance recommends that the PEP is reviewed termly (old). This should make it a more relevant document as schools already review each child's progress on a termly basis. Progress is now collected through the online PEP and not separately.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP): Requirements

Extracts from:

DfE Promoting the education of looked after children: statutory guidance for local authorities

1. All Looked After Children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part.
2. All of those involved in the process of developing the PEP should use it to support the personalised learning of the child.
3. The PEP (pre-school to age 18) is an evolving record of what needs to happen for Looked After Children to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential.
4. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations, and builds life chances.
5. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, designated teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. All of those involved in the PEP process at all stages should involve the child (according to understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent and/or relevant family member. PEP content.
6. It is very important that the child or young person's views are heard and acted on at PEP meetings. It is essential that somebody the child trusts discuss this with them before the meeting and that their views are recorded in the PEP.
7. The range of education/development needs that should be covered in a PEP includes:
 - on-going catch-up support for those who have fallen behind with schoolwork (including use of effective intervention strategies)
 - transition support needs where needed, such as when a child begins to attend a new school or returns to school (e.g., moving from pre-school, primary to secondary school or following illness or exclusion) or when a child has a plan for permanence (e.g., placed for adoption) and may change schools as part of that plan.
 - support needed to help the child realise their short and long-term academic achievements and aspirations. This includes:
 - support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national curriculum key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications
 - careers advice and guidance and financial information about further and higher education, training, and employment
 - out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests
 - school attendance and, where appropriate, behaviour support.

Initiating, developing, and reviewing the PEP

Wherever the child is placed, the social worker, supported by the authority's VSH, should take the lead to:

- initiate a PEP even where a Looked After Child is without a school place. This includes a meeting with appropriate education providers and the carer;
- ensure that where a child is placed in an emergency the PEP is initiated within 10 working days of their becoming looked after, wherever they are placed;
- ensure, with the support of others, including the VSH, that the PEP contains a summary of the child's current attainment and progress;
- ensure the PEP is effective and is available for the first statutory review meeting of the care plan;
- ensure the PEP gives details of who will take the plan forward (including actions for carers) and specifies timescales for action and review

Quality of Personal Education Plans

An effective and high-quality PEP should:

- be a 'living', evolving, comprehensive and enduring record of the child's experience, progress and achievement (academic and otherwise) and inform any discussion about education during the statutory review of the child's wider care plan;
- be linked to, but not duplicate or conflict with, information in any other plans held by the child's education setting;
- include an evidenced evaluation of the previous Pupil Premium spending and identify how the next funding will be spent
- identify developmental (including any related to attachment) and educational needs (short and longer term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
- evaluate progress in each of the areas identified against developmental and educational needs;
- include longer-term plans for educational aspirations. These should, according to age and understanding, typically focus on public examinations, further and higher education, managing money and savings, work experience and career plans and aspirations
- identify actions, with time scales, for specific individuals (including carers) intended to support the achievement of agreed targets and use of any additional resources (including the Pupil Premium) specifically designated to support the attainment of Looked After Children
- highlight access to effective intervention strategies and how this will make/has made a difference to achievement levels

Pupil Premium Funding

The Pupil Premium will be £2.690 a year pro rata for children who are looked after by the local authority for at least one day as recorded in the March 2024 Children Looked After Data Return and aged 4-15 on 31 August 2025. The Virtual School pays schools Pupil Premium on a **Needs Driven** basis with all funding being recorded and agreed via the Personal Education Plans.

The Virtual School allocates the funding it retains to provide **additional support**, for example:

- Transition support for children and young people moving to new schools
 - Educational Psychologist support
 - Letterbox Club – books and games for children in Years 1 to 7
 - Support for Looked After Children not in education
 - Training for designated teachers and other staff who work in schools
 - Staffing
- The Pupil Premium Plus must only be used to **improve outcomes** for children in the following areas:
 - Academic achievement and progress e.g., 1:1 or small group tuition
 - Wider achievement e.g., guitar lessons
 - Inclusion e.g., assigning a mentor for a fixed period of time
 - Transitions e.g., visits to new school with a TA

Post 16 Pupil Premium

South Gloucestershire Virtual School will distribute up to £1,000 per academic year to settings and services to support the education, training, and employment of young people.

Conditions of payment for the Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus

- Funding requirements are clearly identified within the Pupil Premium section of the Post 16 PEP.
- Identification of need is agreed between educational/training setting, the virtual school and social care at the young person's PEP meeting.
- The Virtual School has ultimate control and decision-making responsibility for any Post 16 Pupil Premium payments made.
- There will be no limitations, at this stage, on what this grant can be used for, and decisions will be made on an individual basis relating to personal need.
- If funding beyond £1,000 is required to support a young person, the Virtual School will agree with social care how best to continue/increase the required support if possible.

The 16-19 bursary

A post 16 bursary of £1200 per annum is paid for those young people in care/care leavers in full time education and training. The bursary is:

- claimed by schools and colleges and paid directly to students
 - to be used to support access to education e.g., books, equipment, IT, transport, food, trips. The provider may purchase these directly from the bursary
 - often paid in instalments and may depend on attendance, work rate etc.
- See (www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview) for more information.

Pupil Premium – Post LAC 2024-25

Children adopted from care

Children adopted from care under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and children who have left care under a Special Guardianship or Residence Order will be eligible for Pupil Premium Plus.

A child should be recorded as such on the January Census where the child has been adopted from care or has left care under a Special Guardianship or Residence Order.

This element of the PPG will be allocated on the basis of £2,690 per pupil for each post-LAC in Year Groups R to 11 in mainstream schools.

This amount will be allocated directly to each school.

Monitoring Progress

Our aim is that all children in our care make the same or better progress in their learning compared with their peers.

The Virtual School collects current assessment data on each child 3x per year through the PEP to monitor the progress that each child in care is making and to ensure that appropriate interventions are put into place if good progress is not being made.

In addition, schools are also welcome add to the EGOV PEP system any additional reports which are sent to parents/carers about the child's progress during the year. This additional information will help to ensure much more effective support and intervention to help accelerate the progress and help to identify any continuing barriers to learning. The reports will also help to identify where good progress is being made so that success can also be celebrated.

Exclusions

All schools are required to have a behaviour policy which outlines how the school will promote good behaviour and how services and additional provision will be accessed to try to help a child if he or she is finding it difficult to behave within the clear expectations of the school's behaviour policy.

The local authority does recognise that exclusions are occasionally necessary to maintain a school's behaviour policy; however, for a child in care that option should be the last possible resort for the school to consider.

The Virtual School encourages the use of alternative sanctions as the use of fixed term exclusions for children who are in care can be very damaging - sometimes the fallout from the situation can be well more than what was intended by the exclusion.

Excluding some of the most vulnerable children in the care of the local authority can intensify safeguarding concerns and can also put additional strain on the placement, often at a time when the care placement is also likely to be at a vulnerable stage.

However, where an exclusion of a child in care is unfortunately having to be considered, the school needs to liaise immediately with the Virtual School Head teacher, Steve Claypoole - as well as the usual contacts including the carer and social worker. Contact with the Virtual School is important to support the processes through all the stages so that a positive educational outcome can be achieved.

In addition, the local authority, in its statutory role as Corporate Parent needs to be formally notified about any exclusion. This means that all written correspondence about the exclusion needs to be copied to: Steve Claypoole - Virtual School Headteacher - acting on behalf of Nicola Hannaford, Corporate Parenting Officer for South Gloucestershire.

CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNATED TEACHERS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
--

This checklist covers the **main administrative tasks** the designated teacher needs to carry out. A further checklist to help audit the **quality of provision** can be found at the back of the booklets for designated teachers in primary and secondary schools in www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/

NAME OF DESIGNATED TEACHER:	
------------------------------------	--

Action	In place	Partly in place	Not in place	Action needed	Person responsible	Deadline
1. The designated teacher meets the criteria for the post						
2. The designated teacher has attended appropriate training						
3. The school has an up to date list of Looked After Children in school in care of South Gloucestershire						
4. The school has an up to date list of the Looked After Children in the school in care of other local authorities						
5. Each looked after child has an up to date personal education plan (PEP) in place ➤ <i>Note: It is the responsibility of the designated teacher to ensure that the PEPs are of good quality. PEP needs to be completed within 20 school days of the child going into care or joining a new school.</i>						

Action	In place	Partly in place	Not in place	Action needed	Person responsible	Deadline
6. The PEP is focussed on education and balance of challenge/support ➤ <i>Note: expectation is that Looked After Children will make as least as good progress as their peers</i>						
7. The PEP shows how Pupil Premium funding will be used to support the child to make progress						
8. The school can show that for each child in care it closely monitors: • Academic progress • Attendance • Behaviour • Use of pupil premium funding and impact of the funding						
9. PEPs are aligned with other processes in the school e.g. EHC, IHCP, PSPs ➤ <i>Note: it is reasonable to carry out PEP and SEN reviews at same time.</i>						
10. The school ensures that carers and social workers are fully involved in decisions about Looked After Children and their progress including attendance at parent/carers consultation meetings						
11. The Designated Teacher provides an annual report to governors						

Governor Report: Looked After Children*What could be included in the annual report to governors***Date/Period covered:****Designated teacher for Looked After Children:****Governor:****Number of Looked After Children by Year Group: September 2023 – August 2024.**

Year	Number	Local Authority	Comments

- Role of Designated Teacher
- Training undertaken by Designated Teacher
- Training provided/planned in school related to supporting Looked After Children
- Personal Education Plans
- Pupil Premium Funding – range of activities/impact
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Social and Emotional Development
- Academic progress
- Examination results/Key Stage results
- High Ability Pupils
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- Support/interventions - impact
- Achievements – additional activities
- External support
- School development/Deployment planning
- Examples of good practice
- Case studies
- Transition/special arrangements
- Destination – planned destinations

Useful Resources and External Organisations

- The Who Cares? Trust: <http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/>
- The National Children's Bureau: <http://www.ncb.org.uk/>
- Attachment Aware Schools programme: a new partnership between Bath and North East Somerset Council and Bath Spa University: <http://attachmentawareschools.com/>
- Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire: <http://www.sdqinfo.com/>
- The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children (Ofsted report 2012): <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/impact-of-virtual-schoolseducational-progress-of-looked-after-children>
- Education Matters in Care: A report by the independent cross-party inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children in England: http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/Education_Matters_in_Care_September_2012.pdf
- Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework) and reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedulefor-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection>
- Looked after children: good practice in schools (Ofsted report 2008): <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/looked-after-children-good-practice>