Mulberry
Academy Hastings

Designated Teacher Policy

2026/27

Approval Body	**Principal**
Approval Date	*11th July 2026*
Implementation Date	*1st September 2026*
Review Date	*11th July 2027*

Mulberry
Academy Hastings

Principal: Simon Addison

Key contacts

Position	Name	Contact Details
1. Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr Gareth Wall	G.Wall@hastings.mulberryschoolstrust.org
2. Designated LAC/CLA Teacher	Mr Jay Dann-Finch	J.Dann-Finch@hastings.mulberryschoolstrust.org
3. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Alison Early	a.early@hastings.mulberryschoolstrust.org
4. SENDCo	Mr Jay Dann-Finch – KS4	J.Dann-Finch@hastings.mulberryschoolstrust.org
	Miss Fiona Bray – KS3	F.Bray@hastings.mulberryschoolstrust.org
5. Virtual School Link Advisor	Miss Nicola Thwaites	Nicola.Thwaites@eastsussex.gov.uk

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1. Aims

The school will ensure that:

⇒ A suitably trained member of staff is appointed as the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

⇒ 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 other partners are aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.

⇒ This policy should also be read in conjunction with the schools wider policies and aligns with our vision statement: ***'Be Kind, Be Curious, Be Mulberry Academy Hastings'***

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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 found here.

It also takes into account section 20 and section 20A of the Child and Young Persons Act 2008 found here.

3. Definitions

Looked-after children are registered pupils who are:

⇒ In the care of a local authority i.e. a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked afterwithin the meaning of section 22 of Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;

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

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 order
- An adoption order

Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children are registered pupils that are:

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⇒ A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Personal education plan (PEP) is part of a looked-after child's care plan that is developed with the school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen to ensure the child reaches their full potential.

Virtual school head (VSH) is a local authority officer responsible for promoting the educational achievement of their authority's looked-after children, working across schools to monitor and support these pupils as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing information and advice to schools, parents and guardians in respect of previously looked-after children. Our academy works with Virtual Schools across the country in respect of an individual student's Local Authority designation.

Our local Virtual School Worker is:

Nicola Thwaites

Children's Services Caseworker

Virtual School, Children We Care For

07510382608 | 01323 464630

Nicola.Thwaites@eastsussex.gov.uk

YES East Sussex County Council

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

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The Designated Teacher is also the Key Stage 4 SENDCo and as such, works closely with the SEND team and Head of Year teams to ensure that we best support the needs of the LAC/ PLAC students in our care. In order to centralise the meeting bookings and digitised PEP paperwork we also have an SEND administrator to support the Designated Teacher.

4. Role of the Designated Teacher

The responsibilities of a Designated Teacher are outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance.

The Designated Teacher has lead responsibility, but individual tasks may be appropriately delegated.

4.1 Leadership responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will:

- ⇒ Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children
- ⇒ Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll
- ⇒ Work with social workers and other social care professionals and the Virtual School to promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll
- ⇒ Work with other services e.g., CLASS, CITS, EPS, ESBAS (East Sussex) to ensure effective assessment and support for looked after and previously looked after children requiring additional support
- ⇒ Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand:
    - The things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve
    - How the whole school supports the educational achievement of these 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

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- ⇒ 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 to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- ⇒ Work closely with the SENCO to ensure that special educational needs are identified and appropriate support is put in place
- ⇒ Involve parents and guardians of previously looked-after children and parents of looked after children as agreed with social workers, in decisions affecting their child's education.

4.2 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 and deciding, with partners, what provisions will best meet needs
- ⇒ Monitor and track the progress of looked after children and review as part of the PEP
- ⇒ If a child is not on track to meet their targets, plan intervention as part of the PEP
- ⇒ Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put into place

Ensure that:

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- ⇒ A looked-after child's PEP is reviewed at least three times a year and kept up to date so that it informs review of their care plan
- ⇒ PEPs are effectively completed so that they give clear information about a child's strengths and difficulties and give a clear plan for how needs will be met.
- ⇒ Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have
- ⇒ The PEP process is used to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- ⇒ The updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VS representative within 2 weeks of the PEP meeting.
- ⇒ PEPs are transferred to a child's next school or college, making sure it is up to date and that the local authority responsible for looking after the child has the most recent version

4.3 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 parents of previously looked-after children to provide support for these children
- ⇒ Work together with parents and others to decide on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children
- ⇒ Ensure Teachers have awareness and understanding of the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and how these impact on all areas of school life e.g. behaviour, attendance, homework and future career planning
- ⇒ Be aware of the special educational needs (SEND) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure Teachers also have awareness and understanding of this and that liaise effectively with SENCOs and other specialist staff e.g. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing co-ordinators.

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- ⇒ Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children and previously-looked-after children, is followed
- ⇒ 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
- ⇒ Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of looked after and previously looked-after children e.g. formal assessment Thrive, Boxall, SDQ alongside more informal information gathering

5. <u>Relationships beyond the school</u>

The Designated Teacher will:

- ⇒ Proactively engage with social workers and other care professionals to enable the school to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- ⇒ Work with local authority and external services to respond effectively to the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children
- ⇒ Discuss with social workers 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
- ⇒ 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

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- 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 exclusion:

- Contact the Virtual School as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to avoid exclusion becoming necessary
- Work with the Virtual School and child's carers, to consider what support/ strategies need to be put in place to support more positive behaviour.

6. <u>Monitoring arrangements</u>

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher for LAC. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

7. <u>Links with other policies</u>

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

⇒ Behaviour for Learning

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- ⇒ Child protection and safeguarding
- ⇒ Exclusions
- ⇒ SEND Policy
- ⇒ SEND Information Report
- ⇒ Supporting pupils with medical needs

Version Control

Version	Reviewed	Changes Since Last Version
No. 1	11/06/2026	New Policy

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