

DESIGNATED TEACHER POLICY (looked-after and previously looked-after children)

Approving Body	Trust
Date of Last Review	May 2023
Statutory (Y/N)	N
Responsible Officer	BMAT CEO for and on behalf of the Trust

I. AIMS, SCOPE, DEFINITIONS AND THE LAW.

1. *Mission Statement:* BMAT aims to make a real difference in helping to provide the best possible education for looked after and previously looked after children, as much as any other. BMAT is fully inclusive and seeks to give these students professional help, encouragement and support. BMAT is highly ambitious for these young people, knowing that securing the best possible progress for them will greatly enhance their life chances.
2. *Policy Aims.* The Beacon Multi-Academy Trust (BMAT) aims to ensure that:
 - a. A suitable member of staff is appointed as the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
 - b. The designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and supports other staff members to do this too
 - c. Staff, parents, carers and guardians are aware of the identity of the designated teacher, how to contact them and what they are responsible for.
3. *Scope.* This Policy applies to the following students:
 - a. “Looked after children” – registered students who are in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours,
 - b. “Previously looked-after children” – registered students who were looked after by a local authority but ceased to be because of a child arrangements order¹, a special guardianship order or an adoption order.
 - c. Children are also “previously looked-after” if they appear to have been in state care 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 Law.* This Policy complies [statutory guidance on the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#), from the Department for Education (DfE) It also takes into account section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 and complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.
5. *Definitions.*
 - a. A “Personal Education Plan (PEP)” is part of a looked-after child’s care plan that is developed with their school. It forms a record of what needs to happen and who will make it happen, to help the child to meet their potential.
 - b. A “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

¹ Which includes arrangements about who the child lives with and when.

to monitor and support students as if they were in a single school. The VSH is also responsible for providing appropriate information and advice to schools, parents and guardians.

- c. “DSL” means Designated Safeguarding Lead and “DDSL” means Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- d. “AP” means Assistant Principal and “VP” means “Vice Principal”.
- e. “SEN” means Special Educational Needs and “SEND” means Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

6. This Policy links to the following BMAT policies and procedures:

- a. BMAT Student Behaviour Policy;
- b. BMAT Safeguarding and Child protection Policy;
- c. BMAT Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy and Procedure;
- d. BMAT SEND Policy;
- e. BMAT Supporting pupils with Medical Needs; and
- f. BMAT Student Attendance Policy and Procedure.

II. ROLES

Designated Teachers in Beal High School (BHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSL/DDSL 	admin@bealhighschool.co.uk
Deputy Designated Teachers in Beal High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Principals (Heads of School) • Assistant Principals 	
Beal Sixth Form (BSF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Principal (BHS site) • Assistant Principal (TFA site) 	
Designated Teacher in The Forest Academy (TFA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDSL/AP 	admin@theforestacademy.co.uk
Designated Teacher in The Beacon Business Innovation Hub (BBIH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSL/AP 	admin@bbih.org

7. In addition to designated teachers, some BMAT staff have responsibilities in relation to looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Beal High School	Wellbeing Team: Parent Support Advisors (PSA) Pastoral Team: HOYs/DHOYs SEND Deputy Heads of Year SENDCO
Beal Sixth Form	Wellbeing Team: Parent Support Advisors (PSA) Pastoral Team: HOYs/DHOYs SEND Deputy Heads of Year (BHS site) Student Services Manager (TFA site) SENDCO
BBIH	DSL/DDSL SENDCO
The Forest Academy	DSL/DDSL Pastoral Team: HOYs/DHOYs SENDCO

8. The DDSL's in each school (line managed by the Principals/Co-Headteacher) are also the designated lead teacher for looked after children and the central point of contact at each school for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the looked after children we have on roll.
9. Where a child who is looked after also has special educational needs and/or disabilities, the SENDCO in each school will be closely involved with the provision for this group.
10. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school attendance officer, the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, will agree early interventions, as outlined in the [BMAT Student Attendance Policy](#).

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

11. Designated teachers have lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children. They will:

- a. Act as a central point of initial contact within the school for any matters involving looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- b. Promote the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on roll by working with VSH and promoting a culture which prioritises the development and needs of these students.
- c. Ensure that staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve; and how BMAT supports the educational achievement of these students,
- d. Contribute to the development and review of policies, to ensure they consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- e. Act as a source of advice for teachers about working with looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- f. Work with looked-after and previously looked-after children parents or carers, to support good home-school links, progress and high aspirations.
- g. Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEPs.
- h. Work closely with the DSLs and DDSLs, to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- i. Involve parents or carers of previously looked-after children in decisions affecting their child's education.

12. To support looked after children, designated teachers and all staff with delegated responsibility in each BMAT school will:

- a. Ensure looked-after children's PEPs meet their needs by working closely with other teachers to assess each child's specific educational needs.
- b. Have overall responsibility for leading the process of target-setting in PEPs.
- c. Monitor and track how looked-after children's attainment progresses under their PEPs.
- d. 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.
- e. Ensure the identified actions of PEPs are put in place.
- f. During the development and review of PEPs, help the school and relevant local authority decide what arrangements work best for pupils.

- g. Ensure that a looked-after child's PEP is reviewed before the statutory review of their care plan.²
- h. Ensure that 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.
- i. Ensure that the updated PEP is passed to the child's social worker and VSH ahead of the statutory review of their care plan.
- j. Transfer 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.

13. To support both looked-after children and previously looked-after children, the designated teacher and all staff with delegated responsibility in each BMAT school will:

- a. 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.
- b. Work with VSHs to agree how pupil premium funding for looked-after children can most effectively be used to improve their attainment.
- c. Help raise the awareness of parents and guardians of previously looked-after children about pupil premium funding and other support for these children.
- d. Play a key part in decisions on how pupil premium funding is used to support previously looked-after children.
- e. Encourage parents' and carers' involvement in deciding how pupil premium funding is used to support their child, and be the main contact for queries about its use.
- f. 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.
- g. Be aware of the special educational needs (SEN) of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and make sure teachers also have awareness and understanding of this.
- h. Ensure the SEND code of practice, as it relates to looked-after children, is followed.
- i. Make sure PEPs work in harmony with any education, health and care (EHC) plans that a looked-after child may have.

² 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

- j. 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.
- k. 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.
- l. 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.
- m. Put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of previously looked-after children.

14. To manage relationships beyond the school, the designated teacher and all staff with delegated responsibility in each BMAT school will:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Proactively build relationships with local authority professionals, such as VSHs and SEN departments.
- e. Consider how the school works with others outside of the school to maximise the stability of education for looked-after children.³
- f. Seek advice from VSHs about meeting the needs of individual previously looked-after children, but only with the agreement of their parents or carers.

³ 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

- g. Ensure 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, to review and develop educational progress.
- h. Ensure that, for each looked after child, school policies are communicated to their carer and social worker and, where appropriate, birth parents.
- i. Ensure that, for each looked after child, teachers know the most appropriate person to contact where necessary, such as who has the authority to sign permission slips.
- j. Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, contact the VSH as soon as possible so they can help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid exclusion becoming necessary; and work with the VSH and child's carers, to consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place.
- k. Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, talk to the child's parents or carers before seeking advice from the VSH.