**Guidance for Designated Teachers of Sutton Children Looked-After**

Every educational setting needs to appoint a designated person to promote the educational achievement of children looked-after (CLA) previously looked-after. Every child looked-after has a Care Plan and the Personal Education Plan – the PEP – is part of this statutory plan.

**The key roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher/Lead are to:**

* be a central point of initial contact within the school and ensure that arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to the child’s learning
* promote their education and a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
* lead on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child’s progress towards education targets is monitored
* 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 pupils.

Make that sure that all staff:

• have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children’s learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;

• are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child’s behaviour;

• understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;

• appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child’s PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, the child’s own understanding of how they are being supported;

• have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child

**Sutton Virtual School for Children Looked-After PEPs**

Once a child comes into care, their first Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting needs to be held within 20 working days. It must be attended by the Designated Teacher at the school (or a representative), the social worker and the foster carer. The child will have an allocated case manager at the Virtual School, who will organise PEP meetings and attend some of them over the course of the year.

Sutton Children Looked After then have termly PEP meetings thereafter. We use an editable Word template to record the PEP. The child’s Virtual School case manager will issue this to you ahead of the meeting. The Designated Lead needs to draft the document, ready for discussion in the meeting, populating all possible fields.

**Designated Teacher duties for every PEP:**

Once you have completed and returned the PEP document to the Virtual School case manager, it will be quality assured and a finalised copy will be sent to you, the social worker and saved on to their electronic file. It is up to the social worker to decide whether to share information with the birth parents.

**The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)**

This needs to be completed by a teacher/key worker that works with the child often and returned electronically to the Virtual School case manager ahead of the PEP meeting, so that it can be scored ready for discussion in the meeting. It is usually undertaken for the first PEP meeting and every Autumn thereafter. When you chair the meeting, please ensure that the SDQ results are discussed and actions are recorded to provide the young person support if of the fields are scored as high or low

**Pupil Premium Plus**

The Sutton Virtual School allocate pupil premium plus funds on a ‘needs’ basis. You can request to claim pupil premium funds on the last page of the Pep document and it will be considered by the Virtual School case manager, who can agree up to £600 per term, and can liaise with the Virtual School Headteacher to consider requests for more than this. All pupil premium funds need to be specifically used to support the child and promote their educational achievement. It can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for children looked-after. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence-based and in the best interests of the child. Designated Teachers need to cite the impact of pupil premium funds in each PEP. Pupil premium plus funding for previously looked after children is allocated directly to and managed by their school.

**Contact**

Please contact the child’s Virtual School case manager in the first instance, or alternatively:

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| Virtual School Headteacher: | Kate Leyshon [kate.leyshon@cognus.org.uk](mailto:kate.leyshon@cognus.org.uk)  Tel: 07515 137 705 |
| Primary/ Early Years Specialist  & Assessment and Quality Assurance Manager: | Sara Martin [sara.martin@cognus.org.uk](mailto:sara.martin@cognus.org.uk)  Tel: 07534 528 680 |
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