



Policy for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children



Purpose

To promote the educational attainment, achievement, progression and welfare of Looked After and previously Looked After Children.

Rationale

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Looked After Children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers, which can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Looked After Children progressing to Higher Education and following progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

The term '**in care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school.

All these groups are said to be '**Looked After Children**' (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

A '**previously looked-after child**' is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

Introduction

Hetton School aims to promote the educational attainment, progression, achievement and Welfare of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children is Mrs Susanna Cooke.



The Governor with special responsibility for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children is Mrs Philippa Morgan

The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all looked after pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

We aim to contribute towards achieving positive outcomes for all children whatever their background or circumstances. We aim to ensure that our students:

- Stay safe
- Are healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

Aims

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for LAC as for all children
- ensure that all LAC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
- ensure that LAC take as full a part as possible in all school activities including extra-curricular, trips and wider school responsibilities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Admissions

Hetton School endorses the Sunderland City Council Policy for the admission of looked after children and young people.

Due to care placement changes, looked after children may enter a school mid-term. Hetton School believes that it is vital that we give each looked after child the support for a positive introduction and induction programme, and work with the school to help them settle and be part of their new learning community.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum.



Our Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. We will work in collaboration and partnership with other schools and the virtual schools to make appropriate provision for all looked after pupils.

Allocation of Resources

Hetton School will ensure that it allocates resources to support appropriate provision for looked after children and young people, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

We will work in partnership with schools and external learning providers including Virtual Schools to ensure that looked after children and young people receive the full range of support to which they are entitled, to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children

A Personal Education Plan – PEP is initiated within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care, and ensures that the child or young person is actively involved.

The Virtual Schools will liaise with the Designated Teacher and other agencies to provide support for the student to meet the objectives of the PEP.

For Previously Looked After Children there is no requirement for a PEP however the school will continue to support the student using PP funding and request support from the Virtual School if required.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher knows all the Looked After Children in a school and has access to their relevant contact details including Parents, Carers, Social Worker, and Virtual School specialists.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support looked after children.

Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness within the school and disseminate information of issues associated with looked after children and young people.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable looked after children and young people to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Direct correspondence and phonecalls/emails to carers, one-to-one meetings with students, teaching and learning sessions, contact with social workers, PEP meetings and multi-agency meetings, including Care Team meetings and Looked After Reviews, are opportunities to further this partnership and for collaborative working.

Links with external agencies/organisations



We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting looked after children and young people. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with an individual child who is looked after:

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Virtual School for Looked After Children
- Fostering Officers
- School Improvement Service
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- External Learning Providers

Looked After Children Policy Review and Evaluation

We undertake a thorough review of both the Looked After Children Policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Teacher is expected to:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children within school
- be proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise attainment of Looked After Children
- work in partnership with Local Authorities providing termly progress data on the progress of Looked After Children
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Looked After Children on both the Looked After Children and the rest of the school community
- know all the Looked After Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- attend relevant training about Looked After Children and disseminate information and good practice to other staff
- Influence school policy and practice for Looked After Children act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Looked After Children, seeking advice from the Virtual School when appropriate.
- ensure that looked after children receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle



- ensure that all looked after children have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- arrange and contribute to PEP Review meetings
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and on an ongoing basis to
- monitor the targets set out in the PEP
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting and inform the Virtual School if a Looked After Child is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children
- ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for Looked After Children
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement
- report to the Governing body on Looked After Children in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
 - the number of Looked After Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
 - their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - their attainment (grades/GCSEs) compared to other pupils.
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Looked After Children.
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.
- for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

All School Staff expectations:

- positively promote the raising of a Looked After Child's self esteem.
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Looked After Children.
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress.
- ensure any Looked After Children is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- follow school procedures.



- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- liaise with the Designated Teachers where a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties
- work in partnership with Sunderland Virtual School and other agencies to prevent a Looked After Child's behaviour leading to an official exclusion and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in the care placement.
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher, Virtual School for Looked After Children and other professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

School Governing Bodies are expected to:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Looked After Children
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- liaise with the headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met
- Identify a governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children
- nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher
- receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
 - out of school learning and extra curricular activities
 - additional educational support
 - work experience and careers guidance.
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Looked After Children.
- In the event of an exclusion, ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meeting of the Looked After Child.

As part of Sunderland Local Authority, Sunderland Virtual School will:

- provide a Virtual Headteacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After Children
- provide a wrap-around service for Looked After Children as part of Sunderland Virtual School
- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Looked After Children



- ensure that the education for looked after children is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- ensure that Looked After Children receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- ensure that every looked after children has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Sunderland from another authority
- make sure that each Looked After Children has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- keep and maintain accurate and up-to-date records
- work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer including options advice and guidance for Key Stage 3-4 transition.
- be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special educational needs of Looked After Children and work collaboratively with schools, other services and agencies to meet those needs.

Contact Details Sunderland Virtual School:

Trish Stoker, Virtual Headteacher

Maureen Barrow, Specialist Teacher

Joanne Davis, Specialist Teacher

Andrew McGuckian, Post 16

Tim Worley, Tutor

Vivien Fell, Emotional Support Worker

Greta Little, Tutor

Leanne Greenlaw, Administrative Assistant

Based at Tudor Grove Centre, Portland Road, Sunderland, SR3 1SS, Tel: 0191 5535776 or 07767272761

Link Policies for Schools:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equality and diversity policy and SES
- Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or in light of any changes in legislation and/or guidance.