



MONKWEARMOUTH ACADEMY

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

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Purpose

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After Children within Monkwearmouth Academy.

Aims and Objectives

- To create an environment which provides continuity and stability;
- To help build self-confidence and self-esteem;
- To work in partnership with parents/carers;
- To encourage robust home-school links;
- To support and improve educational progress and promote achievement;
- To ensure that LAC have equal access to the curriculum at Monkwearmouth Academy and associated nationally recognised tests such as GCSE's@
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for LAC;
- To ensure that the school's anti-bullying strategies and equal opportunities policies encompass LAC;
- To develop close liaison with, and effective co-operation between all relevant agencies involve in the care of LAC eg Together for Children, Department for Education and Educational Social Worker ESW).
- To ensure LAC take as full a part as possible in school activities.

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 considerable educational underachievement exists when compared to their peers. This can result in poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population with fewer Looked After Children progressing to Higher Education or following progression pathways leading 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 Court 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 Sunderland Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Sunderland.

Introduction

Monkwearmouth Academy aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and welfare of Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Mr K Graham, Assistant Headteacher who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mr J Cogdon who is also the safeguarding governor.

The governing body is committed to providing a quality education for all its students 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. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 contains information on what schools should do and sets out legal duties with which schools must comply and should be read alongside Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018. The Children Act 1989 sets out the legal framework.

We aim to contribute towards:

- Staying safe
- Being healthy
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well being

As corporate parents this academy believes in the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- celebrating success
- admissions

Admissions

The Governing Body endorses the Sunderland City Council Policy for the admission of Looked After Children including promoting the education of looked after children (statutory guidance for local authorities) 2014 section 23 which priorities the admission of LAC. The Governing Body of Monkwearmouth Academy, as the admissions authority, will admit pupils to the school in accordance with the following criteria as a matter of priority 'Looked After' children, a child that is looked after by the Local Authority in accordance with Section 22 of

the children's Act 1989 (b) and a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so, because of adoption (or become subject to a child arrangements order, residence order or special guardianship order).

Due to changes in care placements, Looked After Children may enter school at any time in the term. This academy believes that it is vital that we give each Looked After Child a positive welcome and full support for their induction to help them settle and be part of our learning community. Section 24 of guidance to local authorities states that in year, fair access protocols do NOT apply to LAC in secondary education.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our LAC Policy reinforces the need for teaching and learning that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the academy makes appropriate provision for all Looked After students.

Allocation of Resources

The Governing Body will ensure that the academy allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with Sunderland Virtual School and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that Looked After Children 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

Every LAC needs a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which ensures access to services and support; contributes to stability; minimises disruption and broken schooling signals particular and special needs, establishes clear goals and acts as a record of progress and achievement.

The PEP should be an integral part of the LAC's Care Plan and Section 32 of guidance states the Virtual school ensures that a PEP must be initiated within 10 working days of becoming LAC.

The Academy assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. Section 38 states the PEP should link to but not duplicate other plans.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP review meetings and provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, specialist teacher from Sunderland Virtual School (or other Virtual School, where the child is from another Local Authority) and other agencies. Targets in the PEP should be reviewed termly and the PEP updated every six months (section 41).

One to One Support

LAC Students may require additional support as part of their PEP. This must be applied for where appropriate or supplied from their designated funding.

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher knows all the Looked After Children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Sunderland Virtual School specialist staff, teacher/support worker and social worker. The status of Looked After Children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available to all

classroom teachers and relevant associate staff. LAC are identified as a vulnerable group when tracking, monitoring and reporting on attainment and progress.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support a LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with LAC within the academy and disseminate information.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We believe in developing strong partnerships with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential to aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting LAC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual LAC:

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Sunderland Virtual School for Looked After Children
- Other Virtual Schools for looked after children from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS/CYPS
- Education Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- External Learning Providers

LAC Policy Review and Evaluation

The Designated Teacher for LAC will undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the impact of the Looked After Children Policy and Practice each year and report to the Governing Body.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for Looked After Children within the academy
- be proactive in identifying ways in which the academy can raise attainment of Looked After Children
- work in partnership with Sunderland Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those students who are from other 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 the academy, 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 academy 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 Sunderland Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those students from other Local Authorities, when appropriate.
- ensure that Looked After Children receive a positive welcome on entering the academy, especially mid year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new student settle
- ensure that all LAC have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 10 days of joining the academy 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 at six monthly intervals
- monitor the targets set out in the PEP
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a Looked After Children is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion; section 27 of statutory guidance states that a Headteacher should as far as possible avoid excluding any LAC
- ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual student
- act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to Looked After Children
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.
- encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra-curricular activities to LAC.

All academy staff will:

- 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 academy procedures.
- be familiar with the academy'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
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher.

The Governing Body will:


- 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 Executive Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Looked After Children are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for Looked After Children who links with the Designated Teacher
- ensure that the academy's policies and procedures give Looked After Children equal access in respect of:
 - admission to the academy
 - 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 academy 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
- challenge the Designated Teacher in a robust manner to ensure that LACs attainment and achievement is in line with non-LAC.

Sunderland Local Authority will:

- Provide a Virtual Headteacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After Children
- Provide a specialist team to 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 students is as good as that provided for every other student
- 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 10 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 staff receive appropriate information, support and training
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- work with others to provide smooth transitions
- 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.

This policy was updated in October 2018 and will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if necessary.

Signed  Executive Headteacher Date 9/10/18

Signed  Chair of Governors Date 9/10/18

