




# LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

<b>Date Approved by Governing Body:</b>	<b>December 2016</b>
<b>Signature of Chair of Governors:</b>	
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	<b>December 2017</b>

## **Purpose**

To promote the educational achievement and wellbeing of 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. 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.

## **Introduction**

Red House Academy aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and emotional wellbeing of Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Mrs Karen Mould SENCO.  
The Governor with special responsibility for Looked After Children is Mrs Smith

The governing body is committed to providing quality education for all its 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 99 of the Children and Families Act 2014” and associated guidance on the education of Looked After Children.

We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which is the Government’s aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances:

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

### **Aims**

The aims of the Academy are to:

- ensure that Academy policies and procedures are followed for Looked After Children and for all children
- ensure that all Looked After Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability
- ensure that Looked After Children take as full a part as possible in all Academy activities
- hold PEP reviews at least every 6 months each academic year
- Provide updated data on progress on a termly basis
- ensure that carers/parents and social workers of Looked After Children are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment
- ensure that Looked After Children are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

### **Admissions**

The Governing Body endorses the Sunderland City Council Policy for the admission of Looked After Children.

### **Inclusion**

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

### **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 for Looked After Children 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**

The social worker for the Looked After Child initiates a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of the pupil joining the Academy, or of entering care, and ensure that the child or young person is actively involved.

This Academy assesses each Looked After Child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP Review meetings and to provide copies of the PEP to the carers, parents, social worker, specialist teacher from Sunderland Virtual School, or other Virtual School where the child is from another Local Authority, and other agencies.

### **Record Keeping**

The Designated Teacher knows all the Looked After Children in the Academy and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Sunderland Virtual School specialist staff, or other Virtual School specialists for those looked after students who are from other Local Authorities, teacher/support worker and social worker.

The status of Looked After Children is identified within the Academy's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Due to care placement changes, Looked After Children may enter the Academy mid-term.

### **Staff Development**

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support 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 a strong partnership 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 (*Looked After Children in Education Team*)
- 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
- Youth Offending Service
- School age parents' officer
- External Learning Providers

### **LAC 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 Academy Improvement Plan.

## **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 Academy community
- know all the Looked After Children in Red House Academy, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from Academy 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 Red House 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 20 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
- ensure confidentiality on individual students, 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 that care and Academy liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other Academy 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 Academy 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 students.
  - their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other students.
  - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
  - the destinations of students who leave Red House Academy.
- 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 SENDCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEND.

**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 Child 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
- work in partnership with Sunderland Virtual School, and/or Virtual Schools from other Local Authorities, and other agencies to prevent a Looked After Child's behaviour leading to an official exclusion and only use exclusions in line with the Academy'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, Sunderland Virtual School for Looked After Children, and other Virtual Schools for those students who are from other Local Authorities, and professionals/ parents/carers/student as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

**The Governing Body will:**

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Looked After Children according to the Government's 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 Principal, 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 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.

**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 this group of 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 Child 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
- provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of Key stage 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.

**Local Authority contact details for the Education of Looked After Children are:**

**Sunderland Virtual School for Looked After Children**

Dawn Shearsmith, Virtual Headteacher  
 Emma Patterson, Inclusion Officer  
 Brian Buckle, Assistant Inclusion Officer  
 Helen Whewell, LAC Teacher  
 Jo-anne Davis, LAC Teacher  
 Marueen Barrow, LAC Teacher  
 Leanne Greenlow, Administrative Support



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**Link Policies:**

- Positive Behaviour for Learning
- Equal Opportunities
- Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy