



Sedgefield Primary School

Learning Together for Life

POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN **(Including Previously Looked After)**

Sedgefield Primary School 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 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of LAC, including Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Rationale

Looked After Children – LAC - are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers, largely as a result of the impact of life experiences, rather than differences in overall ability. The school is committed to work towards removing barriers to learning and to support looked after children in order for them to fulfil their potential.

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. As corporate parents, we recognise that we all have a part to play in redressing the balance for these children by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting ‘early years’ experiences
- celebrating success.

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 pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of LAC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- ensure that LAC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

Who are Looked After Children?

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 Durham.

Who are Previously Looked After Children?

Previously Looked After Children are those who (DfE definition):

are no longer Looked After by a Local Authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order; were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State Care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

It is recognised that Previously Looked After Children are still vulnerable due to their past life experiences and continue to require support and additional provision in order to help them achieve their full potential.

Admissions

Sedgefield Primary endorses DCC policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against LAC pupils. Due to care placement changes, LAC may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. School will offer additional support, pre-entry visits and/or a phased start to help the new pupil settle.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for LAC within school
- have high expectations and set targets to accelerate progress
- raise awareness (at admission) with carers on the use of Pupil Premium+ funding (£2300)
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the LAC and the rest of the school community
- know who are all the LAC 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 LAC
- act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from the LAC team when appropriate
- ensure that LAC receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupil settle
- ensure that all LAC 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
- keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at termly intervals
- convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a LAC 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 LAC
- 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 extracurricular activities for LAC
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and school books, where appropriate, when a LAC transfers to another educational placement
- attend LAC reviews
- report to the Governing body on LAC in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development

- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc.
- prepare reports for Governors' meetings
- arrange a mentor or befriender (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, particularly when the pupil is new to school
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs (emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation – attachment awareness – and subsequent impact on behaviour) are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. (LAC are six to eight times more likely to have an EHCP than the general school population.)

All school staff will:

- follow school procedures
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a LAC's progress
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC
- positively promote the raising of a LAC's self-esteem
- ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a LAC is experiencing difficulties
- 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 other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- make extra copies of reports available when required.

The Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- liaise with the Headteacher to ensure the teaching and learning needs of LAC are met and reflected in school policies, in particular in relation to interventions and resources
- nominate a governor with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - the curriculum
 - out of school learning and extra-curricular activities
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for LAC for PP+ in supporting the educational achievement of LAC and previous LAC pupils.

The Virtual School

The Virtual School is made up of all of the Looked After Children in the care of Durham County Council. Those children and young people may be educated in Durham schools or elsewhere.

The Virtual School will:

- promote educational achievement through providing information and advice to their parents, educators and others as necessary
- provide appropriate training
- start from when the child is eligible for free early education, (start of term following second birthday) to end of compulsory education.

The Virtual School Headteacher will:

- respond to requests for advice and information from parents, carers, schools and providers and sign-post to other services
- raise awareness of the vulnerability and needs of previously LAC and offer guidance to schools on effective use of PP+
- work with Designated Teachers to ensure secure evidence from parents of their child's previously Looked After status. If there is no clear evidence, the Virtual School Head (VSH) and Designated Teacher (DT) should agree a consistent approach.

The Virtual School Headteacher will not:

- be held to account for the attainment of individual children
- provide intervention without the agreement of those with parental responsibility.

Inclusion

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

Our LAC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The school will ensure that appropriate provision is made for all LAC pupils. Please see the Inclusion Policy.

Allocation of resources

The school will ensure that resources are allocated to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Monitoring the progress of LAC

The social worker for the LAC should initiate a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the child is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each LAC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. LAC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs and the child's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support LAC. The staff have attended attachment training recently.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

At school, we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable LAC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working, but regular contact in person or via email is also very important.

Links with external agencies/organisations

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

- LAC teams
- educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- medical officers
- school nurses
- CAMHS
- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service

LAC policy review and evaluation

We consider the LAC Policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year.

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Andrea Cox

Governor Responsible for Looked After Children: Janine Lowes