



# Academy 360

## Looked After Children Policy 2017

Approved by:

Academy 360 Governing Body

Date: September 2016

Next Review

Date: September 2017

## **Purpose**

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

At Academy 360 we believe that 'Looked After Children' (LAC) have distinct identities, aspirations and particular needs. They all have the potential and the right to succeed. We will endeavour to enable the LAC to achieve his or her true potential by creating a climate, which is conducive to achieving measurable improvements, and by providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

## **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.
- To encourage robust home-school links.
- To support and improve educational progress and promote achievement.
- To ensure that the LAC has equal access to the National Curriculum and associated tests.
- 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, between all relevant agencies, e.g. Children's Services, Health, Housing, Police and Probation.

## **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.

## **Introduction**

Academy 360 aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and Welfare of Looked After Children.

The Designated Teacher for LAC is E Welsh.

The Governor with special responsibility LAC is Carole Carroll

The Trust Board is committed to providing 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 LAC.

## **Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children**

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

The Academy assesses each Looked After student'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 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 LAC in school 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.

## **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 childcare 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
- Education Welfare Officers
- Youth Offending Service
- External Learning Providers

## **LAC Policy Review and Evaluation**

We undertake a thorough review of both the Looked After Children Policy and practice annually.

**Date of Last Review:** March 2017

**Review Date:** March 2018

## **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 LAC.
- 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 LAC.
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for LAC on both the Looked After child and the rest of the Academy community.
- Know all the LAC in the Academy, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from the Academy record-keeping systems as required.
- Attend relevant training about LAC and disseminate information and good practice to other staff.
- Influence the Academy policy and practice for LAC
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC, seeking advice from Sunderland Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those students from other Local Authorities, when appropriate.
- Ensure that LAC 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 pupil 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 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 student.
- Act as the key adviser for staff and the Academy Trust Board on issues relevant to LAC.
- Ensure that care and the 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 LAC.
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a Looked After Child transfers to another educational placement.
- Report to the Academy Trust Board on LAC 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 the Academy Trust Board meetings to include:

The number of LAC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.

Their attendance compared to other student.

Their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other students.

The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.

The destinations of students who leave the school.

Attend Trust Board meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of LAC.

Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN.

**All school staff will:**

- Positively promote the raising of a LAC's self esteem.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of LAC.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Looked After Child's progress.
- Ensure any LAC is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Follow school procedures.
- Be familiar with the Academy policy and guidance on LAC and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a LAC 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 Academy Trust Board will:**

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises LAC according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all Trust Board members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for LAC
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for LAC
- Liaise with the Executive Head teacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of LAC are met
- Identify a Trust Board member with special responsibility for LAC.
- Nominate a Trust Board member with responsibility for LAC who links with the Designated Teacher.
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher.
- Ensure that the Academy's policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of Admission to the Academy National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational. Out of Academy learning and extra-curricular activities, additional educational support. Work experience and careers guidance.
- Annually review the effective implementation of the Academy policy for LAC.
- In the event of exclusion, ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meeting of the LAC.

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### **Sunderland Local Authority will:**

- Provide a Virtual Head teacher who has responsibility for championing the education of LAC. Provide a specialist team to provide a wrap-around service for LAC as part of Sunderland Virtual School.
- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for LAC
- Ensure that the education for this group of students is as good as that provided for every other student.
- Ensure that LAC receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every LAC has an Academy/school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Sunderland from another authority
- Make sure that each LAC has a PEP according to national guidance ensure that every Academy has a Designated Teacher for LAC 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 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 LAC and work collaboratively with schools/Academy's, 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**

Virtual Head teacher

Jo-anne Davis Specialist Teacher: Academy 360 Link

Emma Pattison, Out of area and Sunderland residential.

Helen Whewell

Maureen Barrow KS3 and Y10

Andrew McGuckian Post 16 LAC Education Co-ordinator

\*Based at Tudor Grove Centre, Sunderland, SR3 1SS, Tel: 0191 553 5770

### **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

Every LAC needs a PEP which ensures access to services and support; contributes to stability; minimize 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, which is drawn up by Social Services, in close collaboration with the child, his or her family, the social worker and teacher and primary carers. It should be agreed as soon as possible and at least within 20 school days of entering care or of joining a new school. The PEP will normally be reviewed concurrently with the Care Plan, i.e. within 28 days, 3 months, 6 months etc.

### **The LAC and SEN**

- The needs of the LAC should be known to the SENCO, the designated teacher, their carer and their social worker.
- Their PEP should detail their needs and the support already provided.
- It is important to ensure that any special educational needs are identified and assessed.
- We must not assume that all LAC have special educational needs.
- It is essential to respond to emotional, behavioural and mental health needs with well-planned support.
- It is important to promote inclusive policies within the context of the Academy's robust pastoral systems.

### **Link Policies:**

- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities
- Child Protection
- SEN