



Looked After Children Policy

Beacon Hill School Mission Statement:

To enable students to maximise their potential and live happy and fulfilling lives

Aims of Looked After Children (LAC) policy:

Develop learning for life, lifelong learning

Looked after Children should have the same opportunities as other children to reach their full potential through their education. They should be given high aspirations to achieve the same as others.

Are Happy, Healthy and Heard

We recognise that it is important that we listen to children and young people who are looked after and support them communicating their wants and needs.

Ensure inspiring positive partnership

It is important that everyone shares information, to work together in reviews, in the best interests of the child.

Purpose:

To promote the educational attainment, achievement, progression and welfare of Looked After Children in the care of North Tyneside and all Looked After Children in the care of other local authorities who attend Beacon Hill. The local authority has a statutory role to play for all children in its care and acts as a Corporate Parent.

In light of the extension of the role of Designated Teachers and The Virtual School Head, this policy will also make reference to previously looked after children who are adopted, have a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order (previously residence order).

Legal Framework- Which pupils are Looked after?

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 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.

- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (Sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38)
- 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. For all children who receive more than 75 days of 'short breaks' in every 12 months LAC status applies and an Independent Reviewing Officer is appointed. As the care arranged is not continuous academic attainment does not have to be reported in the same way to the DfE.

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 attending Beacon Hill School, in North Tyneside.

For the purpose of this policy, previously looked after children include those:

- that were adopted from care
- that left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- that left care under a Residential Order on or after 14 October 1991 (under the Children Act 1989);
- that left care through a Child Arrangement Order
- that were adopted from abroad but were in state or church care in their country of origin

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children Within School.

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Looked After Children and that staff understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To promote the involvement of LAC children in full school life, including extra curricular activities, school councils, etc.
- To act as an advocate for Looked After Children.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers, health professionals and the North Tyneside Virtual School; and those of other Local Authorities, including overview of the work completed with the safe-guarding officer in relation to these pupils.
- To hold a supervisory brief for all Looked After Children, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up-to-date. It is important to be aware that some children in care do not want all adults or peers to know about their accommodation or care status.
- To monitor the educational progress, attainment and attendance of Looked After Children.
- To include targets on the performance of looked after children within the School Development Plan.

- To intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement, absence from school or internal truancy, facilitating meetings or giving guidance to where teachers may find appropriate information.
- To celebrate the success of all Looked After Children, in line with other forms of celebration that take place in school.
- To ensure all monitoring procedures; such as behaviour and attendance data, monitor LAC pupils as a discreet group, in comparison to other pupils. To monitor this information and work with other colleagues to ensure any interventions occur.

Work that may happen with Individual Looked After Children

- Ensure the child can make a contribution to the educational aspects of their care plan or EHCP.
- To help ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan (the PEP should be initiated by the young person's social worker from the Authority responsible for them). The PEP sets out appropriate targets and support available. There should be a PEP set once a term and the education element will closely link to the PLP set by school.
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus, which applies to looked after children who have been in care 6 months and over is targeted at improving attainment and achievements. Where possible, pupils should have a say in how this money is spent.
- Publish a summary of the impact of the Pupil Premium spend on the school website.
- To consult, where appropriate, with the child or young person and ensure they have an appropriate adult who will attend school events e.g. parents' evenings; sports; drama events to provide support and encouragement.

Liaison with other Partners

- To liaise with the Designated safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Pastoral lead to ensure all procedures are followed and all LAC pupils are safe-guarded.
- To support an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) co-ordinate education and Looked After Children review meetings, so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the child's Care Plan, by ensuring teachers pass on information to the Safeguarding Officer to attend reviews.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend usually our Pastoral Safeguarding lead, or to contribute in other ways to Looked After Children at care planning meetings and PEP meetings. To create systems for information to be shared and stored appropriately.
- To be the named contact for colleagues in the North Tyneside Virtual School / RHELAC Team and other local authorities as appropriate;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information and school records between agencies and other school.
- To ensure the school admits Looked After Children in line with the Admissions Code of Practice; schools should admit all looked after children separate to 'In Year Fair Access Protocols'.
- To follow schools Positive Behaviour management policy to ensure that the Head Teacher considers a range of strategies before exclusion for a looked after child, which should be a last resort. This includes contacting the Head of The Virtual School and accessing First Day Response provision.

Training

- To develop a knowledge of Vulnerable Children's Education and inclusion procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority and other providers;
- To attend training for Designated Teachers as appropriate;
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate. To support staff with any specific issues that may arise for a Looked After Child (LAC), particularly around their own mental health and wellbeing, sign posting to additional support as needed.

The role of the Governor for Looked After Children (LAC):

- The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis (unless it will be easy to identify individual children whereby work on behalf of all vulnerable groups may be more appropriate)
- Areas that may be reported;
 - A comparison of test scores for looked after children as a discrete group, compared with the attainment and progress of other pupils;
 - The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared with other pupils
 - The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and Pupil destinations.
 - Impact of any PP+ spending.
- The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedure ensure that looked-after pupils have equal access to:
 - An appropriate curriculum; Public examinations (where appropriate); Careers guidance; Additional educational support; Extra-curricular activities; Work experience
- The named Governor will - meet termly with the designated teachers to discuss the needs of Looked After Children and review impact of Pupil Premium Funding.

Responsibility for Looked After Children in School

- It is important that all staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being looked after by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head Teacher, Safeguarding and Pastoral lead and/or the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- It may be necessary to other staff working with or around the child to know that they are Looked after. This information can be shared in a confidential manner to the staff who need to know. The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for Looked after Children within school.

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records (including the PEP) will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker. A date will be agreed for a new Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of a new looked after children being admitted. An appropriate school admissions meeting will take place. In some cases it may be helpful to provide a mentor from within or external to the school community.

Involving the Young Person

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. It is good practice to consult and share with a young person appropriate records that are held by school and the local authority. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the social worker, and their carer(s) are working together to help them achieve in school. In Beacon Hill, appropriate communication systems such as Makaton and PECS may be appropriate to support the young person's understanding of this. Staff who are most familiar with the pupil, will work to support their understanding of this.

Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (eg end of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Foster Carer or care placements. It should be agreed at the PEP meeting what information parents will receive, this needs to be in line with the legal framework. A Social Worker will be able to give advice on correspondence with parents and approaches to normalise consent for routine school activities.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures:

Each looked-after pupil will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that school will contribute to. This will identify, success, specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. The PEP developed by North Tyneside Council is age group specific. Areas for consideration will include:

Attendance;

Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);

Behaviour;

Homework;

Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities;

Special needs (if any);

Support being provided

Use of Pupil Premium

Development needs (short and long-term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and

Long-term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).

The PEP will be updated once a term as part of the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by Children's Social Care. The PEP will be stored on the local authority ICS case management system and circulated to all key parties who attended the PEP meeting.

North Tyneside Council will:

- Provide a Virtual Head Teacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After Children
- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Looked After Children
- Ensure that the education for this group of pupils is as good as that provided for every other pupil

- Ensure that Looked After Children receive a full-time education wherever possible
- Ensure that every Looked After Child has a school to go to within 20 school days of coming into care or of coming to North Tyneside from another authority
- Make sure that each Looked After Child 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
- Provide advice and guidance for those looked after children and Care Leavers in Further and Higher Education
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special education needs of Looked After Children and work collaboratively with schools, other services and agencies to meet those needs
- Consider the views of all looked after children through a variety of strategies including the Children in Care Council and Youth Council.

This policy closely links to our Pupil Premium Policy

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children at Beacon Hill School is Francesca Kennedy
Our Safeguarding and Pastoral lead is Fiona Chadwick.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) is responsible for keeping this policy up to date and ensuring that it is implemented across school.

Written by Francesca Kennedy
February 2021

Agreed by Staff Governors:
To be reviewed: February 2024

Appendix 1:

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

North Tyneside Virtual School /RHELAC Team

Head of the Virtual School: Jane Pickthall

Data Officer: Wendy James

Langdale Centre
Langdale Gardens
Wallsend
Tyne and Wear
NE28 0HG

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Appendix 2:
Example of Personal Education Plan (PEP) North Tyneside

