



Whole School Cared for Children Policy

Respect

Respect is the foundation on which our schools values are based. We promote care, trust and honesty with our learners, their families/carers, schools, academies and all other partners and stakeholders.

Communication

In order to realise shared goals and achieve the very best for learners we work collaboratively with parents/carers, schools, academies and other stakeholders. We will communicate the highest standards and expectations at all times.

Respect

Respect is the foundation on which our schools values are based. We promote care, trust and honesty with our learners, their families/carers, schools, academies and all other partners and stakeholders.

Date:	September 2021
Date approved by Management Committee:	16.9.21
Signature of Chair of Management Committee:	<i>A. Cunningham</i>
To be reviewed:	Annually

Whole School Policy for Cared for Children

Purpose

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Cared for Children in Sunderland (including those from out of area).

Introduction

Cared for Children – are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of Cared for 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 Cared for 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 Cared for 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 '**Cared for Children**' (CARED FOR CHILDREN). They may be Cared for by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Previously cared-for children are those who:

Are no longer Cared for by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well 2 An 'eligible' child is a child who is looked-after, aged 16 or 17 and has been Cared for by a local being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or 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.

The Link School aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and Welfare of Cared for Children.

The Designated Persons for Cared for Children are;

Springwell Dene;

Wendy Ellison – Designated Person

Gaynor Proctor – Designated Teacher

Leanne Clark – Designated Teacher

Emma Robson – Designated Teacher

Pallion;

Donna Walker – Designated Person

Clare Curry – Designated Teacher

The Management Committee member with special responsibility for Cared for Children is Viv Ingleton.

The 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 Cared for children and previously Cared for children" (February 2018) and Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Cared for and previously Cared for Children (February 2018)

We aim to contribute towards achieving the five outcomes of child centered support, where the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances is to:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy

- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

As corporate parents this school 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
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success

Aims

The aims of the school are to:

- ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for Cared for Children as for all children
- ensure that all Cared for Children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- ensure that Cared for pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- ensure that carers and social workers of Cared for pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- Ensure that Cared for pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.
- The Head Teacher will, as far as possible, avoid excluding any Cared for Children.
- The Designated person will inform the social care officer of any exclusions involving Cared for Children.

Admissions

The Management Committee endorses the Sunderland City Council Policy for the admission of Cared for Children.

Due to care placement changes, Cared for Children may enter school mid-term. This school believes that it is vital that we give each Cared for Child a positive welcome and full support for their induction and to help them settle and be part of our learning community.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our CARED FOR CHILDREN Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Management Committee will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Cared for pupils.

Allocation of Resources

The Management Committee will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for Cared for Children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

We will work in partnership with Sunderland Virtual School for Cared for Children and other Virtual Schools for students who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that Cared for Children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.

Monitoring the progress of Cared for Children

The social worker for the Cared for Children initiates a Personal Education Plan – PEP - within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the child or young person is actively involved. (Where the child is placed in an emergency the PEP should be initiated **within 10 working days** of their becoming Cared for)

A PEP should be linked to but not duplicate or conflict with information in any other plans. Targets in the plan should be reviewed frequently and at least every 6 months (3 after an initial PEP).

This school assesses each Cared for pupil's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

The school have appointed two Designated Teachers to support the PEP process

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated person 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, Designated Teacher Link School, and other agencies.

Record Keeping

The Designated person knows all the Cared for Children 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 Cared for students who are from other Local Authorities, teacher/support worker and social worker. The Designated person works closely with the Designated teacher to ensure plans are bespoke to the child and that academic targets are SMART.

The status of Cared for Children is identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Staff Development

We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support CARED FOR CHILDREN. Part of the Designated persons role is to raise awareness of issues associated with CARED FOR CHILDREN within the school and disseminate information. All those staff involved in the preparation of PEPs have attended the relevant local authority training.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable CARED FOR CHILDREN 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 Ch Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual CARED FOR CHILDREN:

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential childcare worker
- Sunderland Virtual School for Cared for Children (*Cared for Children in Education Team*)
- Other Virtual Schools for Cared for 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

- School age parents' officer
- External Learning Providers

CARED FOR CHILDREN Policy Review and Evaluation

We undertake a thorough review of both the Cared for Children Policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Person and Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for Cared for Children within school
- be proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise attainment of Cared for 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 Cared for Children
- give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for Cared for Children on both the Cared for Children and the rest of the school community
- know all the Cared for Children 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 Cared for Children and disseminate information and good practice to other staff
- Influence school policy and practice for Cared for Children
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to Cared for Children, seeking advice from Sunderland Virtual School, and/or other Virtual Schools for those students from other Local Authorities, when appropriate.
- ensure that Cared for Children receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid year, and offer additional support wherever possible such as a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle
- ensure that all CARED FOR CHILDREN 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
- 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 Cared for Children 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 Cared for Children
- 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 extra-curricular activities for Cared for Children
- ensure a speedy transfer of information, records, and coursework, where appropriate, when a Cared for Child transfers to another educational placement.
- report to the management committee on Cared for Children in the school 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 management committee meetings to include:
 - The number of Cared for Children on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan – PEP.
 - Their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - Their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils.
 - The number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- Attend management committee meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of Cared for Children.
- 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 Cared for Child's self-esteem.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Cared for Children.
- Keep the Designated person informed about a Cared for Child's progress.
- Ensure any Cared for Children is supported sensitively, and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Follow school procedures.

- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Cared for Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- liaise with the Designated person where a Cared for 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 Cared for Child's behaviour leading to an official exclusion and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful to the difficulties this may create in for Cared for children.
- 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 person, Sunderland Virtual School for Cared for Children, and other Virtual Schools for those students who are from other Local Authorities, and professionals/parents/carers/pupil as appropriate
- Make extra copies of reports available when required.

The management committee will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Cared for Children according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all members are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Cared for Children
- ensure there is a Designated person for Cared for Children
- liaise with the head teacher, Designated person, and all other staff to ensure the needs of Cared for Children are met
- Identify a member with special responsibility for Cared for Children
- nominate a member responsibility for Cared for Children who links with the Designated person
- Receive regular reports from the Designated person.
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures give Cared for Children equal access in respect of:
 - admission to school
 - 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 school policy for Cared for Children.

Sunderland Local Authority will:

- Provide a Virtual Headteacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Cared for Children
- Provide a specialist team to provide a wrap-around service for Cared for Children as part of Sunderland Virtual School
- lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for Cared for Children
- ensure that the education for this group of pupils is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- ensure that Cared for Children receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- ensure that every Cared for Children 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 Cared for Children has a PEP according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated person for Cared for 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 the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer including options advice and guidance for Key Stage 4-5 transition.
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special educational needs of Cared for Children and work collaboratively with schools, other services, and agencies to meet those needs.

Local Authority contact details for the Education of Cared for Children are:**Sunderland Virtual School for Cared for Children**

Linda Mason Sunderland Virtual School Head Teacher – 07900350502

Leanne Greenlaw, Administrator and Data Manager

Emma Pattison, Inclusion Officer

Helen Whewell, Specialist Teacher

Kelly Woods and Helen Taylor Post 16 Advisors

The Sunderland Virtual School are based at The Bunnyhill Centre, Hylton Lane, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, SR5 4BW.

Link Policies:

- Behaviour policy
- Equal Opportunities
- Every Child Matters – Outcomes
- Inclusion
- Child Protection Policy
- SEND