

# HURWORTH — SCHOOL —



## Looked After Children (LAC) Policy

Accepted by:

Governing Body

Lead Reviewer:

Associate Assistant Head

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## Introduction

Note that at Hurworth school and throughout this policy we make reference to Looked After Children (LAC) we note that some local authorities are moving towards Children in Care (CIC) and as such we are referencing the same group of students who are care experienced.

## Aims

Hurworth School is committed to supporting all children to reach their full potential. We recognise that we have special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked After Children (LAC). Here at Hurworth we strive to make progress with LAC students' academic and character development, aiming to continue to close the well-publicised national gaps between this pupil group and their peers. Throughout their time at Hurworth we want LAC students to feel that their voice has been the driving force behind the professional team involvement, that they have been well prepared for life after Hurworth.

## Rationale

Hurworth recognises that Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, and within a school setting often experience significant disadvantage. The majority of LAC have suffered a disrupted childhood, experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma within their lives including but not limited to abuse, neglect, loss and rejection. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. LAC often achieve poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer Looked After Children progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being. The trauma experienced in early years will also have an impact on the LAC social skills set and how they interact with peers and adults in school shown through national statistics that LAC are at greater risk of exclusion.

Here at Hurworth we believe that we can be a source of stability, a place to make and maintain friendships, a place to feel safe, a place for potential to be realised, and a place to thrive both academically and personally. We have highly trained team of trauma informed practitioners who lead the school on ensuring that all students will have positive productive relationships with both staff and peers. We aim to ensure that whatever the students experience, they will be heard, and they will not have to struggle alone. As our understanding of ACEs improves we have registered all our LAC students on the SEND register as their needs based on early trauma means they will receive above the universal offering.

## Our objectives

- To provide a safe and secure environment; both physically and psychologically, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children
- To bring the educational achievements of our LAC nearer to or equal to those of their peers
- To accept our role as corporate parents in relation to the education of LAC and to ask the question “Would this be good enough for my child?”
- To offer dedicated pastoral support with emotionally available adults.

## Guiding Policies

Our key aims are created in accordance with the DfE Guidance documentation:

### ***Promoting the education of Looked After Children – February 2018***

This can be accessed from this link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683556/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

Also relevant is the ***Guidance for Designated Teachers for Looked After and Previously Looked After children – February 2018***

This can be accessed from this link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683561/The\\_designated\\_teacher\\_for\\_looked-after\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

***Statutory guidance for local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and NHS England for the promotion of health and well-being for looked after children - March 2015***

This can be accessed from this link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/413368/Promoting\\_the\\_health\\_and\\_well-being\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children.pdf)

NB – Within this document where the term Looked After Children is used this also refers to previously Looked after Children where appropriate

## 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 ours. Hurworth school educate LAC from a wide range of Local Authorities.

## Who are Post Looked After Children (PLAC)

PLAC children are those who:

- Are no longer LAC by a local authority in England and Wales (Children's Act 1989) because they are subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements 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.

## Admission Arrangements

On admission, records (including the PEP/EPEP) will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker/virtual school caseworker/ other professionals involved. A date will be agreed for a new Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of a new LAC being admitted. An appropriate school admissions meeting will take place. The usual school admissions forms and process must also be completed. In some cases it may be helpful to provide a mentor from within or external to the school community.

## Education Plans

### 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. At Hurworth we will utilise the mentor meetings to capture student voice, and encourage participation at ePEPs. 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 work together to help them achieve in school.

### Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports e.g. End of year reports should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Foster Carer or Residential Social Worker. 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 advice on correspondence with parents and approaches to normalise consent for routine school activities.

### Assessment, Monitoring and Review of Progress

Each looked-after pupil will have a Care Plan that the Social Worker takes a lead in developing. This will identify, success, specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. The Personal Education Plan (PEP/EPEP) is the responsibility of the designated teacher in developing and is quality assured by the virtual schools for Looked After Children. Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)
- Behaviour
- Homework
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities
- Special Educational Needs (if any)
- Development needs (short and long-term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Long-term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations)

The PEP/EPEP will be updated each term, as part of the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by Children's Social Care, the individual virtual schools have their own termly deadlines. Most virtual schools have moved to electronic PEPs that are stored on platforms such as welfarecall, alternatively the PEP will be stored on the local authority case management system and circulated to all key parties who attended the PEP meeting.

The DT will seek academic input from subject teachers and review SIMs, classcharts and CPOMs data.

## Responsibilities

In pursuit of our aims and objectives Hurworth will:

- Appoint a designated teacher responsible for LAC who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Appoint a mentor to support LAC on a day to day basis (KS3 & 4 students).
- Ensure that high priority is given to completing all the relevant sections of each looked after child's Personal Education Plan. Appropriate steps should then be taken to enable each looked after child to reach their targets, and ultimately, their educational potential.
- Ensure the most appropriate application for, monitoring and reporting of funding for PP+ available for LAC students.
- All governors and staff will work in partnership with parents and agencies especially Social Services and Health Department to co-ordinate support for LAC.
- Nominate a specific governor with responsibility for this area of the school's work.
  - The name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is **Mrs Beth Wright**
  - The Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Mrs Beth Wright**

**The name of a Governor with responsibility for Looked After Children is Martin Stand and their role is outlined below.**

The named Governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis (unless it will be easy to identify 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
- Pupil destinations

The named Governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedure ensure that Looked After Pupils have equal access to:

- The national curriculum
- Public examinations
- Careers guidance
- Additional educational support
- Extra-curricular activities
- Work Experience

## Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will:

- Identify a DT for LAC and PLAC. Head Teacher will make provisions if DT is absent.
- Support the DT in carrying out the role by making time available.
- Ensuring that appropriate training is available.
- Ensuring the DT has necessary time and resources available to carry out the role.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and exclusion of LAC and ensure strategies are in place to address any concerns.
- Report on the progress, attendance and behaviour of LAC to all parties involved
- To ensure that all staff receive relevant training about the needs of LAC and PLAC and are aware of their responsibilities.
- To ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used effectively to support appropriate provision for individual LAC.

## The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

- 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 inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Looked After Children, and to promote the involvement of these children in school ILT clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils etc.
- To act as an advocate for Looked After Children.
- To promote the progress for Looked After Children.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers, health professionals and the Virtual School.
- To hold supervisory brief for all Looked After Children, e.g. To ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carers, 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 intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement, absence from school or internal truancy.
- To promote and celebrate the success of all Looked After Children.

Work with individual Looked After Children:

- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their care plan.
- To help ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan/EPEP (the ePEP should be initiated by the young person's social worker from the Authority responsible for them and the Designated Teacher within Hurworth School). The PEP sets out appropriate targets and support available.
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium which applies to Looked After Children who have been in care 6 months and over is targeted at improving attainment and achievements.



- To consult with the child or young person and ensure they have an appropriate adult who will attend school events e.g. Parents' evening, sports, drama events in order to provide support and encouragement.
- To support transition both at KS2 coming to Hurworth and KS5 post Hurworth.
- Ensure the team of therapeutic trauma practitioners are matched with the LAC and progress is being made in their sessions

#### Liaison with other Partners:

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register, ensuring all Looked After Children in school are safeguarded.
- To help an Independent Reviewing Office (IRO) co-ordinate education and Looked After Children review meetings, so that the Personal Education Plan/EPEP can inform the child's Care Plan.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to Looked After Children at care planning meetings and PEP meetings.
- To be the named contact for colleagues in the Darlington Virtual School and other local authorities/virtual schools as appropriate.
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information and school records between agencies and other schools.
- To ensure the school admits Looked After Children in line with the Admissions Code of Practice; schools should admit all LAC separate to 'In Year Fair Access Protocols'.
- To ensure that the Head of School considers a range of strategies including discussion with virtual head, before exclusion for a Looked After Child, which should be a last resort.

#### Training:

- To develop a knowledge of Vulnerable Children / Education 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.

#### **All Staff (teaching, teaching assistants and support staff)**

- Be aware which of our students are LAC/PLAC
- Recognise the impact of trauma and ACEs on children's development and their ability to build relationships and how this might affect their behaviour.
- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of LAC and PLAC as for all students.
- Recognise the importance of seeing LAC and PLAC as individuals rather than a label/group and not treat them differently to their peers, showing sensitivity to their status.
- Use classroom strategies to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC particularly around content which may trigger difficult emotions or information coming from the LAC update.
- Keep the DT informed about the LAC and PLAC progress, via the Edukey round robin requests.

## **Local Authorities will:**

- Provide a Virtual Headteacher who has responsibility for championing the education of Looked After Children
- Provide targeted support for Looked After Children as part of the Virtual School
- 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 in a mainstream setting 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 Darlington from another authority
- Make sure that each Looked After Child has a PEP/EPEP 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
- Liaise with local Collaborative panels, Enhanced Mainstream Primary Schools and Pupil Referral Service over alternative educational provision
- 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, 3 and 4
- 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
- Hold events that celebrate the achievement of Looked After Children
- Consider the views of all Looked After Children through a variety of strategies including the Young Person's Council

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

Whilst Hurworth school falls under the Darlington local authority we educate and have corporate parenting responsibility for LAC from various local authorities. This changes annually, however the local authorities that we as a school are most involved with include:

- Darlington virtual school Head: Mr Calvin Kipling (supported by Gill Etherington)
- Durham virtual school Head: Mrs Melanie Stubbs (supported by Jane Hillier)
- Stockton virtual school Head: Mrs Janet Wilson (supported by Elizabeth Townsend)
- Middlesbrough virtual school Head: Mrs Victoria Banks (supported by Wendy Haslam)

## **Links to other policies:**

The needs of LAC and PLAC should be kept in mind in all other policies such as:

- Pupil premium policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Racial equality & equal opportunities statement
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy