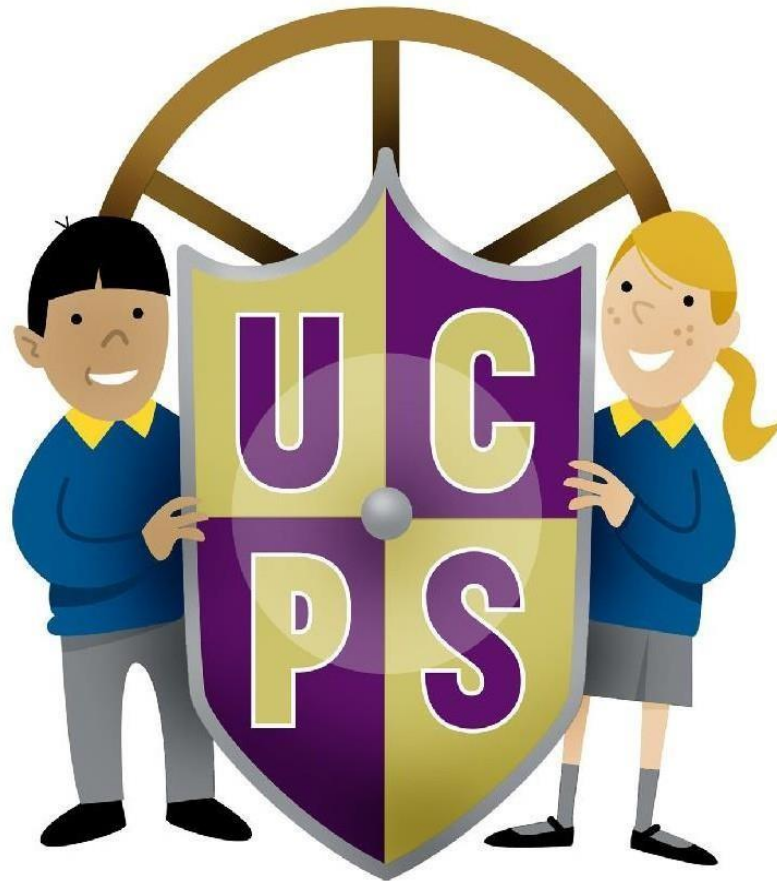


together for
children
SUNDERLAND



USWORTH COLLIERY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cared For Children Policy

**(POLICY FOR CARED FOR CHILDREN, CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL
WORKER AND PREVIOUSLY CARED FOR CHILDREN)**

Designated members of staff: Alicia Walker

Chair of Governors: Alison Logan

The aim of this policy is to promote the educational attainment, achievement, progress, and welfare of children in the care of Together for Children, Sunderland, or in the care of another Local Authority who attend Usworth Colliery Primary School. It also outlines how we promote the learning and support those learners who were previously cared for or have a social worker.

Rationale

Cared for Children (CfC), Previously Cared for Children (PCfC) and Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) are amongst the most vulnerable groups in society. These children have experienced a disrupted childhood, often with educational neglect and adverse experiences.

It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under-achievement with this cohort of children when compared to their peers. They often have lower attendance, higher suspensions and exclusions, educational neglect, and gaps in their learning, leading to lower attainment outcomes and reduced chances to progress to Further or Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

The local authority has a statutory role to play for all children in its care and acts as a Corporate Parent. The Virtual School has the corporate responsibility for the education of children in their care and for providing advice, guidance and signposting for those children who have previously been cared for (PCfC) alongside a strategic overview of those children who have a social worker (CWSW).

Legal Framework

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 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)
- 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.

The term “cared for” 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 CfC status applies and an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) 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 “Cared for Children” (CfC). They may be cared for by our local authority living in or out of Sunderland, or may be in the care of another authority, but living in Sunderland.

For the purpose of this policy, Previously Cared for Children include those:

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The Name of the Designated Teacher for Cared for Children and Previously Cared for Children in our school is:

Mrs Alicia Walker (Assistant Headteacher)

The Name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children with a Social Worker in our school is:

Mrs Alison Forster (Headteacher)

The Role of the Designated Teacher for CfC and PCfC and the Designated Safeguarding Lead for CWSW

Within School

- Hold a supervisory brief for this cohort of children, ensuring all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s); and that this information is kept up-to-date and accurate, whilst remaining aware **that some children do not want all adults or peers to know about their accommodation or care status**
- Ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, understand the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by this cohort of children and the effect Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s), attachment, trauma and mental health have on their learning; and that staff are conscious of the need for positive systems of support and strategies to overcome these barriers.

- Promote positive outcomes for these children through school policies and procedures which are inclusive, and ensuring their involvement in the wider community in school is promoted, i.e., intervention activities, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school council, homework clubs.
- Act as an advocate for this cohort of children within school and with external agencies.
- Develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers, health professionals, and the Sunderland Virtual School (for CfC).
- To monitor the educational progress, attainment, and attendance of this cohort of children.
- Include targets on the performance of this cohort of children within the School Development Plan and evaluate through the school self-evaluation and report to governors.
- Provide early intervention if there is concern over individual emotional health and well-being, under-achievement, absence from school including emotional school-based avoidance or exclusion/suspension.
- Celebrate the success of this cohort of children in an appropriate and inclusive way.

Work with Individual Children

- Consult with the child or young person on a regular basis to ensure their voice is heard and issues/concerns are addressed in a timely fashion to enable early intervention strategies.
- Ensure regular contact with carers, and where appropriate, their social worker who will attend; PEP meetings for CfC, school events e.g., parents' evenings; sports; drama events to provide support and encouragement.
- Ensure all issues of concern are communicated in a timely fashion to their carer, and for cared for children, their social worker and Virtual School Caseworker to enable early intervention to remove any barriers to learning.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium for CWSW and Pupil Premium Plus Grant for CfC and PCfC is targeted at improving attainment and achievement.
- Assist CfC and CWSW to make a meaningful contribution to the educational aspects of their care plan.
- Assist the Personal Education Planning cycle to ensure that each CfC has a termly PEP meeting which results in an accurate, quality and up-to-date PEP using the Welfare Call system (***this is not a statutory requirement for PCfC or CWSW, however, a termly education review with carers is deemed to be good practice***). ***Lambton primary hold open evenings each term and send a report home mid-year and end of year.***
- Complete the EPEP setting appropriate SMART targets and the support available from school and external agencies.

Liaison with External Partners

- Liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register, ensuring they are safeguarded in school.
- Assist the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to co-ordinate education input into the CfC review meetings, so that the EPEP can inform the child's Care Plan.

- Attend, and arrange for others to attend, or to contribute in other ways, to care team planning meetings and EPEP meetings, as appropriate.
- Be the named contact for colleagues in the Virtual School and other local authority staff, as appropriate.
- Enable the speedy transfer of information and school records between agencies and other schools/education provision.
- Work with the Virtual School to ensure the admission of a CfC is speedy and in line with the Admissions Code of Practice; schools should admit all CfC separate to 'In Year Fair Access Protocols'.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher before the suspension or exclusion of a child, to consider a wide range of support strategies and alternatives which can be used, in conjunction with the virtual school caseworker (for CfC) and social care colleagues; ensuring exclusion or suspension would always be used as a last resort.

Training and Awareness

- Continue to develop knowledge of how adverse childhood experiences impact upon the learning and inclusion of CfC, PCfC and CWSW.
- Attend regular training/awareness raising events to ensure school policies and procedures promote the inclusion of this cohort of children and reflect their particular challenges and needs.
- Lead whole school awareness of ACE's, trauma and attachment, and disseminate good practice and strategies to the wider school staff.
- Attend training for Designated Teachers on the ePEP process, as appropriate.

The name of a Governor with special responsibility for Cared for Children and Previously Cared for Children in our school/provision is:

Mrs Vicki Kennedy

The role of the Governor

The named governor will ensure an appropriately qualified (QTS), and senior member of staff, is appointed to the roles of Designated Teacher for CfC and PCfC and Designated Safeguarding Lead for CWSW and meets regularly with these staff. Report back 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 outcomes for CfC/PCfC/CWSW as discrete groups, compared with the attainment and progress of other pupils
- The attendance of pupils as discrete groups, compared with other pupils
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
- Pupil destinations.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedure ensure full inclusion of CfC/PCfC and CWSW, and that they have equal access to:

- The national curriculum
- Public examinations
- Careers guidance

- Additional educational support
- Extra-curricular activities
- Work experience

Responsibilities for Cared for Children, Previously Cared for Children and Children with a Social Worker in School

Admission Arrangements

On admission, records (including the EPEP) will be requested from the child's previous school and an admission meeting should be held with carer/parent/social worker, if appropriate and the virtual school caseworker (for CfC only), to ensure a successful integration plan and strategies for support are in place.

For Cared for Children, a date will be agreed for a new Personal Education Plan (EPEP) within 20 school days of admission; this is not statutory for previously cared for children or children with a social worker, however, an education discussion with carers and other professionals involved with the child is deemed to be good practice.

Information Sharing

It is important that all relevant staff are aware that a child or young person is being Cared for by the Local Authority, has previously been cared for, or has a Social Care involvement. It is appropriate for school staff to have this awareness when they are directly involved in the teaching or support of the young person, or in some cases the direct supervision of them during breaks and lunch times.

The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be with the Head Teacher in conjunction with the Designated Teacher for CfC and PCfC or the Designated Safeguarding Lead for CWSW. **It is important to be aware that some children do not want all adults or peers to know about their accommodation or care status.**

In the absence of the usual class teacher, information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared, where appropriate, with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head Teacher, the DT for CfC and PCfC or the DSL for CWSW.

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 or parent/carer in relation to previously looked after children and children with a social worker.

Communication with Other Agencies

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (e.g. termly reports) should be forwarded to the child's Social Worker and Virtual School Caseworker, in addition to the Carer. For CfC it should be agreed at the EPEP meeting what information parents will receive, this needs to be in line with the legal framework. A Social

Worker will be able to advise on correspondence with parents and approaches to normalise consent for routine school activities as part of the PEP.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures for PEP's

Each cared for child 2 – 18 years will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), specific to their age. This will identify outcomes, success, specific areas of concern and include SMART targets and responsibilities for ensuring support is given.

The Electronic PEP is a live document commissioned through the Welfare Call iCloud system on behalf of Sunderland Virtual School. Social Workers and IROs also have access to this system.

The EPEP will be updated termly by the school in time for the termly PEP meeting, to ensure compliance with the statutory reviewing process carried out by Children's Social Care. The Designated Teacher should ensure all data is accurate and up-to-date and entered into the document prior to the PEP meeting taking place.

Information recorded in the EPEP includes:

- Attendance
- Safeguarding and care information
- Identified Special Educational Needs and support strategies (where appropriate)
- Conduct and engagement in learning.
- Emotional health and wellbeing (including in-school and external support, where required).
- Achievement and progress record
- Pupil Premium expenditure, areas to be targeted and impact of strategies.
- Alternative education arrangements, where applicable
- SMART short and long-term targets (aligned to EHCP targets, where relevant)
- Development needs (short and long-term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities
- Long-term plans and aspirations (including CIAG).

Further Guidance and Advice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

Please also see Virtual school quality assurance framework for PEPs on Welfare Call/Documents section

Together for Children, Sunderland will:

- Provide a Virtual School Head who has responsibility for championing the education of cared for children and previously cared for children.
- Provide a specialist team of caseworkers to provide targeted support for school, carers, social care colleagues and external agencies to support cared for children, and provide advice and signposting to services for PCfC and CWSW
- Lead the drive to improve educational standards for cared for children, previously cared for children and children with a social worker.

- Promote the education for this group of pupils to be as good as that provided for every other pupil, and that school policies are inclusive to reflect the needs of this cohort.
- Ensure every school/educational provision has a Designated Teacher for CfC and PCfC and that they are of suitable seniority within the school/provision to influence policy and practice.
- Provide support for Designated Teachers, through the casework teams, to discharge this duty.
- Ensure every CfC has a school to go to within 20 school days of coming into care, or when returning to Sunderland from living in another authority area.
- Ensure that CfC have access to a full-time education, in a mainstream setting, wherever possible.
- Liaise closely with TfC Special Educational Needs Team, and SEN teams of other Local Authorities, to ensure appropriate specialist provision is available for those children who require this level of support.
- Consider the views of all cared for children through a variety of strategies.
- Work with schools, partner agencies and carers to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stages 2 and post 16.
- Manage and maintain the Welfare Call ePEP system, ensuring that each CfC has a quality EPEP, according to statutory guidance.
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying special and additional educational needs of CfC and work collaboratively with schools and other services and agencies to meet those needs.
- Represent the needs of vulnerable children on local authority, health authority and other panels, and liaise with local centralised provision to secure alternative educational provision, where this is required.
- Publish guidance on the distribution of the Pupil Premium for cared for and previously cared for children.
- Provide advice and guidance for those CfC and Care Experienced learners in Further and Higher Education.
- Promote events that celebrate the achievement of children.

Author: A. Walker

Agreed Date: June 2024

Implementation Date: June 2024

Virtual School Team – September 2023

| Name | Role | Mobile | Email |
|---|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Business Support and Central Contact | | | |
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Review Date: Annually

Name: Alicia Walker Signed: Date:

 Assistant HeadTeacher

Name: Alison Logan... Signed: Date:

 Chair of Governors