

North East Futures UTC




Looked After Children (LAC) Statement

North East Futures UTC has been established to change the education, skills and employment paradigm in our IT and Healthcare Science sectors in the North East. It provides the opportunity for young people from all the communities in this region to benefit from its specialist provision.

Local Governors and all the North East Futures staff are committed to a policy of equality and aim to ensure that all students, employees, job applicants, other member of the school community and visitors are treated fairly and with respect.

We aim to give equal access to the high quality educational opportunities we provide and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to create a safe and happy environment where all our students can flourish and where social and cultural diversity are celebrated.

Reviewed by:	Principal
Last Reviewed:	May 2021
By Dan Sydes	

Aims

North East Futures UTC recognises that LAC can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting. We are committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We recognise that LAC may have faced significant trauma in the form of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) including

abuse, neglect, loss and/or rejection. When children are exposed to these adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their learning, as well as on their ability to think and to interact with others.

Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, national progress and attainment data clearly shows that LAC are at greater risk of exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Helping LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

North East Futures UTC believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every LAC can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that LAC can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

School can be a source of stability for children who may have been subject to emotional distress and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and thrive.

Looked after children (LAC)

The term 'looked after' has a specific, legal meaning, based on the Children Act 1989: a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if they fall into one of the following:

- is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, [Children Act 1989, Section 20 and 21]
- is subject to a care order [Children Act 1989, Part IV]
- is subject to a placement order **Previously LAC children (PLAC)** PLAC children are those who:
 - are no longer LAC by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-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.

Every local authority is required to appoint an officer to make sure that their duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC is properly discharged; this officer is called the Virtual School Head (VSH). The duties of the VSH are defined in the DfE statutory guidance "*Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children*" – February 2018.

The governing body of a maintained school and the proprietor of an academy must ensure that an appropriately qualified and experienced member of staff, undertakes the responsibilities within the school to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school's roll; this person is the 'designated teacher'

(DT). The duties of the DT are defined in the DfE statutory guidance "*The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children*" – February 2018.

Principles

NEFUTCi is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of LAC in the following ways:

- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of LAC.
- Providing a climate of acceptance and challenging negative stereotypes.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education that meets the needs of the individual child.
- Ensuring that (LAC) students have the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of the school, including the curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience.
- Ensuring LAC have a PEP that addresses all aspects of education including health and wellbeing and ensures that appropriate support is in place to promote progress.

- Ensuring that carers/parents, social workers and virtual school staff (where relevant) are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensuring that (LAC) students are involved, where practicable, in decisions about their education, including affecting their future provision.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained DT is appointed, who will be responsible for all LAC.
- Prioritising a reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Ensuring discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensuring there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially regarding schoolwork on "family".

Admissions

NEFUTC welcomes all LAC.

All LAC should have the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The school recognises that LAC are an 'excepted group' and will be prioritised in our oversubscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Due to care placement changes, LAC children may enter the Academy mid-term. It is vital that these students are given a positive welcome. If necessary, they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help the student settle.

Confidentiality

Many LAC do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel different. We will maintain and respect the child's confidentiality in consultation with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties. Once this has been agreed, complete confidentiality is to be maintained and information on LAC will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis.

All staff will do their utmost to maintain the child's confidentiality e.g. avoiding reference to their care status/PEP meetings in front of their peers.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with LAC and PLAC, such as Social Care teams; virtual schools, Educational Psychology, health services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

Responsibilities

Governing Body

All governors should be fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of LAC and PLAC.

The governing body will appoint a named governor for LAC and PLAC. The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and DT as the named staff responsible for implementing this policy.

The named Governor should:

- ensure the school has a coherent policy for LAC and PLAC that is regularly reviewed in light of the relevant statutory guidance and that other school policies support their needs.

- ensure that the school has a DT, and that the DT has the necessary time, resources and training to be able to carry out his or her responsibilities.
- ensure LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- allocate resources to meet the needs of LAC and PLAC

The governing body should receive an annual report setting out:

- The number of LAC and PLAC students on the school's roll.
- Their attendance, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- Their progress and attainment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions. • The destinations of LAC pupils who leave the school.

The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned

Head Teacher

The responsibilities of the Head Teacher are:

- To identify a DT for LAC and PLAC. NB it is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the DT leave the school or be absent.
- To support the DT in carrying out his/her role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on LAC.
- To ensure that the DT has received appropriate training and has the necessary time and resources to carry out the role.
- To ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of LAC and ensure strategies are in place to address any concerns in these areas.
- To 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 under this policy and related guidance.
- To ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used effectively to support appropriate provision for individual LAC.

Designated Teacher

Government Guidance says that the DT should be *“someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for LAC and PLAC, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school Looked After and Previously Looked After*

Children Policy shares and supports high expectations for them.” Our Designated

The designated teacher at NEFUTC is Joanne Harrison

This Teacher will:

- Understand the role of carers, social workers and other relevant parties, be the named contact for them and maintain regular communication with them.
- Understand the role of virtual schools and respond promptly to requests for information.

- Act as an advocate for LAC and PLAC in order to maintain high aspirations, allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the PEP to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition to a new school or phase of education and ensure the speedy transfer of information.
- Be responsible for the implementation of the child's PEP and lead in promoting their educational achievement. This includes monitoring academic progress and attendance, and ensuring the necessary support is in place to meet the child's learning, social and emotional needs. This may involve working closely with other key members of staff e.g. the SENCO
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how LAC and PLAC children learn and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- Ensure that each LAC and PLAC has an identified key adult that they can talk to at school.
- Ensure that children are able to discuss their progress and are involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Maintain an up-to-date record of the LAC in school, ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required on a strictly 'need to know' basis and reporting annually to governors, maintaining confidentiality of all LAC and PLAC.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage LAC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Be aware that many LAC and PLAC say they are bullied, so actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Attend training as required and keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding LAC.