



SPECIAL EDUCATION & INCLUSION POLICY

Definition of Inclusion

Within Aspire North East Multi Academy Trust inclusion means a learning environment in which:

- Each person knows that they are valued
- Everyone has a sense of belonging
- The values of the school are shared by staff, pupils, trustees, governors, parents and visitors to the school
- Every member of staff is responsible for the highest possible achievement of each pupil they teach or support

Purpose of this policy

To ensure that the policy guides, and is apparent in, our everyday practice.

Principles

The Academies within Aspire North East Multi Academy Trust believe that:

- Each pupil is unique
- A secure, accepting community celebrates individuality
- Each pupil has special or additional needs some of the time
- Diversity enriches learning - successful inclusion leads to greater pupil achievement and to higher attainment
- Within a wider culture that is often openly racist it is particularly important to value cultural and ethnic diversity and to equip young people with the understanding and skills to challenge prejudice
- This policy supports our Equal Opportunities policy
- Monitoring and evaluating the performance of identified groups of pupils supports and strengthens inclusion
- To support pupils in making the best progress possible, it is desirable that parents, staff and pupils work together
- Every effort should be made to make our buildings accessible to everyone
- It is the responsibility of every member of staff to ensure this policy underpins our everyday practice

Practice

- Inclusion and Achievement are central to our improvement planning
- Every teacher is a teacher of pupils with special and additional needs
- Support is integrated, helping to remove barriers to learning by increasing the active involvement of pupils in their learning
- The progress of pupils with special and additional needs and the achievement of their targets is monitored and reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher (SENDCO), Deputy SENDCO, Year Leaders and Learning Support staff as well as by their teachers, Curriculum Leaders and Quality of Education Team.
- The progress of identified groups of pupils is monitored
- Outside agencies and the Attendance Manager are involved whenever appropriate
- Individual and group support is offered depending on the individual need of the child
- The SEND Code of Practice is fully implemented

APPENDIX 1: SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY

APPENDIX 2: CARED FOR CHILDREN POLICY

Last review date:	18.09.25
Next review due:	Autumn 2026
Person Responsible:	SENDCO
Associated Policies:	Anti-Bullying Attendance Behaviour Management Charging & Remissions Learning Safeguarding & Child Protection Single Equality Scheme Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

APPENDIX 1 - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Aspire North East MAT values the abilities and achievements of all its pupils and is committed to providing, for each pupil, the best possible opportunities and environment for learning.

SEND AIMS

- To ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- To provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- To ensure the identification of all pupils requiring SEND provision as early as possible in their school career
- To ensure that SEND pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- To ensure that parents of SEND pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- To ensure that SEND pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future SEND provision

We recognise that many pupils will have special needs at some time during their school life. In implementing this policy, we believe pupils will be helped to overcome their difficulties.

Whilst many factors contribute to the range of difficulties experienced by some children, we believe that much can be done to overcome them by parents, teachers, pupils, healthcare and social care services working together.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institution

The MAT Board of Trustees believes that the admissions criteria should not discriminate against pupils with SEND and reasonable adjustments must be made for disabled children and young people.

SEN Support

Where a pupil is identified as having SEND, to enable the pupil to participate, learn and make progress schools take action to:

- remove barriers to learning;
- put effective special educational provision in place.

A pupil may be recorded as requiring SEN support and therefore, they will access a combination of:

1. A differentiated curriculum within the classroom setting and quality first teaching within the class.
2. SEN Support through the involvement of outside agency advice, a support plan and termly SEN reviews.

Monitoring of progress will be carried out by the class teacher and used to inform future differentiation within whole class planning.

Where the child's difficulties are severe and continue to cause significant concern with this support and with an individual teaching plan, a statutory assessment may be requested and an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) issued.

INCLUSION

This policy builds on our School Inclusion and Achievement Policy, which recognises the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our SEND policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure that appropriate provision will be made for all pupils with SEND.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT, AND PROVISION

Aspire North East MAT have adopted a whole-school approach to SEND policy and practice. Pupils identified as having SEND are, as far as is practicable, fully integrated into mainstream classes. Every effort is made to ensure that they have full access to the National Curriculum and are integrated into all aspects of the school.

All teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs.

All teachers are responsible for identifying pupils with SEND and, in collaboration with the SENDCO, will ensure that those pupils requiring different or additional support are identified at an early stage. A child's parents, young person, or school have a specific right to request an assessment for an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan) and children or young people themselves should feel able to tell the school if they have or believe they have or may have SEND.

SEND Provision

Close liaison with primary schools, parents / carers together with assessment ensures continuity of learning from Key Stage 2, or transference from another secondary school.

The Range of Provision

The main methods of provision made by the school are:

- Full-time education in classes, support and/or periods of withdrawal to work with Learning Support staff on a 1:1 basis or in small groups.
- Small group work to address issues such as anger management, social skills, low self-esteem.
- Mentoring support when required, targeting identified pupils to address issues that include bereavement, bullying, low self esteem, difficult home circumstances, school bases anxieties, attendance etc.
- The Gateway at Southmoor Academy and The Student Support Base (SSB) at Sandhill View provides help and assistance for vulnerable pupils in a classroom setting.
- Additional tuition for pupils with EAL on an individual or small group basis
- Intervention for identified underachieving pupils – Key stage 3 and 4
- Specialist provision from the relevant outside agencies
- Appropriate exam concessions secured for pupils fitting the required criteria
- Support from Pastoral Support Units – The Bridge (Sandhill View Academy), The Pathway and The Bridge (Southmoor Academy)
- Academic and pastoral support as and when appropriate.

When it is considered necessary, colleagues from the following support services will be involved with SEN pupils:

- Educational psychologists
- CAMHS / CYPS
- Health specialists
- Speech and language therapists
- Language and learning

- Hearing impairment services
- Visual impairment services
- Autism Outreach
- Healthy Heads
- Emotional Resilience nurse
- Social Care services
- TFC case worker

In addition, important links are in place with the following organisations:

- Careers & NEET Service
- The Local Authority
- Specialist services
- Partnership schools and other appropriate educational establishments
- Relevant agencies for drug and alcohol problems
- Community police and youth offending service
- The business community

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Provision includes

- An induction programme
- Support and monitoring by EAL Learning Support staff who arrange any additional support needed both in school and from external providers

Sandhill View Academy:

Assistant Headteacher (SENCO):	Mrs Ashleigh Knight
Link Governor:	Mrs Alice Rowell

Southmoor Academy:

Assistant Headteacher (SENCO):	Mrs Olivia Thompson
EAL Learning Supporter:	Miss Stacey Moody
Link Governor:	Mrs Vasiliki Kontou-Watson

APPENDIX 2 – CARED FOR CHILDREN POLICY

Purpose

To promote the attainment, enjoyment, participation, welfare and achievement of Cared for Children (CfC).

Rationale

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 success and future economic 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**' (CfC). They may be cared for by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Introduction

Aspire North East MAT aims to promote the educational attainment and achievement and Welfare of Cared for Children.

The Designated Teacher for Cared for Children is Mrs Olivia Thompson (Southmoor Academy) and Mrs Ashleigh Knight (Sandhill View).

A Governor will have special responsibility for Cared for Children.

The Board of Trustees and the Academy Council is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils based on equality, 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 under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of Cared for Children.

Aspire North East MAT aims to ensure that Cared for Children are integrated with their peers and are safe, healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve future economic well-being.

Aims of Aspire North East MAT 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.

Admissions

The Board of Trustees 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 CFC Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Board of Trustees will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all cared for pupils.

Allocation of Resources

The Board of Trustees will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CFC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

We will work in partnership with Sunderland Virtual School for Cared for Children and other LA Virtual Schools for those students who are cared for by 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 relevant staff within Aspire North East MAT will liaise with the child's social worker to ensure that Cared for Children have a statutory Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of the pupil entering care, or a Cared for Child joining the school, and ensure that the child or young person is actively involved. The PEP will be reviewed according to the statutory requirements within a 6- monthly cycle and will involve all partners.

This school assesses each cared for pupil's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning and accurate progression analysis from their starting point.

Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP Review meetings and to provide copies of the PEP to:

- Social worker
- Independent Reviewing Officer
- Specialist teacher from Sunderland Virtual School
- Other Local Authority Virtual School where the child is cared for by another Local Authority
- Other agencies involved

Record Keeping

The Designated Teacher 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.

Each Academy will ensure that the status of Cared for Children is identified within the school's Management Information Systems so that information is readily available as required.

We will comply with the Local Authority's termly data request and send all information in good time.

Staff Development

Aspire North East MAT encourages staff to continue their professional development to gain knowledge and understanding of the issues relating to pupils who are cared for and acquire the skills to support CFC. The Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with CFC within the school and disseminate information.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers

We believe in collaboration and working in partnership with parents/carers, social workers and care workers to enable CFC to achieve their potential and achieve future economic well-being. By regular dialogue and review meetings we aim to further our collaboration and partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting CFC. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual CFC:

- Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
- Sunderland Virtual School for Cared for Children (*Cared for Children in Education Team*)
- Virtual Schools for Cared for Children from other Local Authorities
- Educational psychologists
- Local Authority SEN services
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS / CYPS
- Youth Offending Service
- School age parents' officer
- External Learning Providers

CFC 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 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
- 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 social workers, 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 visits and a transition programme

- ensure that all CFC have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care and provide opportunity for the child or young person to contribute to the plan
- arrange and contribute to PEP Review meetings
- Review PEPs at transfer, when there has been a change of circumstance and at six monthly intervals
- Provide copies of PEPs to Sunderland Virtual School
- Monitor the targets and actions 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 effective communication 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
- prepare reports for Trustees / Governors including:
 - 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
 - attainment (GCSEs) compared to other pupils
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school
 - information on policy and practice development
- agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings and other events
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO
- work in partnership with Sunderland Virtual School, and/or Virtual Schools of other Local Authorities, and other agencies to prevent a Cared for Child's behaviour leading to 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 the care placement
- contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times

All staff within Aspire North East MAT will:

- promote the development of a Cared for Child's self esteem
- have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Cared for Children
- keep the Designated Teacher 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 Teachers where a Cared for Children is experiencing difficulties
- keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher, 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

The Board of Trustees / Governing Body will:

- ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises Cared for Children according to the DFE Admissions Code of Practice

- ensure all those in governance are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for Cared for Children
- ensure that the Academy has a Designated Teacher for Cared for Children
- liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of Cared for Children are met
- nominate a governor with responsibility for Cared for Children who links with the Designated Teacher
- ensure that regular reports are presented to the governing body / board of trustees by the Designated Teacher
- 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 Information Advice and Guidance
- annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for Cared for Children.
- In the event of exclusion, ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meeting of the Cared for Child.

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 Cared for Children is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- ensure that Cared for Children receive a full-time education in a setting appropriate to their needs
- 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 statutory Personal Education Plan according to national guidance
- ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher 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 partners to provide smooth transitions at the end of each phase and during any mid-phase transfer
- 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

Virtual Headteacher, Tel: 0191 5535712

Leanne Greenlaw/Susan Wilkinson, Administrator and Data Managers

Tel: (0191) 5535770