



George Stephenson
High School

TRANSIENT CHILDREN POLICY

Governance	Governing Body
Policy Officer	Deputy Headteacher
Review Date	November 2022
Next Review Date	November 2023

We ensure that during the turbulent and challenging times of homelessness, the children are in education and that family circumstances are respectfully heard and understood by key adults in our schools and with partner agencies.

North Tyneside Council

As a school we are committed to working together to support transient children. We recognise that when children and their parent or carer/s become homeless and move into temporary emergency accommodation, this results in a transient lifestyle which affects them all. There is a danger that without consistent support from key agencies that the whole family may quickly and easily fall through the net and become disconnected from health, education and other statutory support systems. Children are at risk of being overlooked or misunderstood unless robust systems are in place.

This policy must be read in conjunction the following policies and guidance:

- [The current Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance Children Missing Education 2016](#)
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing From Education Policy
- Attendance management policy
- Inclusion policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Pupil Premium Statement

Introduction

At *George Stephenson High School*, we care that our children are safe, and their well-being is one of our schools' priorities. It is important that we understand the internal and external factors which affect their ability to access school life and learning.

We recognise that some children come to school having faced significant hardships and difficulties which may have resulted in homelessness and a period of living in temporary emergency accommodation. Many children struggle to cope with those circumstances and events and the impact on their lives, but we want the children to feel safe, supported and understood. We know that services are available from the local authority to support transient children and we will fully engage with these service areas to ensure a holistic approach to supporting the family.

Aims / Objectives of this policy

- To minimise interruption to a child's education, access to learning and progress
- To ensure that our staff can fully support transient children
- To engage with multi-agency professionals in North Tyneside to ensure a joined-up approach to support the family
- To work with parent(s) to ensure that children do not become dis-engaged from services and support networks.
- To encourage parents to become fully involved with school and their child's education and become valued members of the school community.
- Promote parental engagement with local services to reduce inequalities in health, education and other support systems
- To reduce the risk of a transient family's exclusion and isolation.

Why families become transient

Children and families move into and out of temporary accommodation for a variety of different reasons such as domestic abuse, rent and mortgage arrears, repossession of property by private landlord or Council, fleeing violence, relationship breakdown, end of Assured Short hold tenancy and overcrowding. Families who have been supported by National Asylum Seeker Service may present as homeless once they have received leave to remain in the UK.

Issues

Homelessness and living in temporary emergency accommodation can sometimes mean being separated from family, friends and familiar support networks which can impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of adults and children.

Where families are transient there is a risk that

- child/ren missing from a school roll, or not attending/becoming 'lost'
- families become disengaged from health, education and other support systems
- families not consistently registered with a GP
- there is reduction in previously available family / community support/increased isolation
- Information spread across a network of agencies in different areas with no single agency holding the whole picture of a family history
- key safeguarding information is not received by those that need it most
- other adults also resident in temporary accommodation could pose a risk

We recognise that some families in which children are harmed move home frequently to avoid contact with concerned agencies. Any safeguarding/child protection concerns should follow normal safeguarding procedures.

Local support for transient families

At *George Stephenson High School* we are aware of the provision available to transient families. In North Tyneside, Women and children fleeing domestic abuse may seek refuge in Harbour, the domestic abuse provision which provides refuge accommodation. Other transient families may be placed into temporary emergency dispersed properties and very occasionally it may be necessary to have a very brief stay in a bed and breakfast guest house. North Tyneside Council also has a scheme called *New Beginnings* which provides short-term accommodation for up to two years for young parents aged 16 to 25. They may also have school aged children.

North Tyneside Council also provides designated teacher who supports transient families known as the Teacher for transient families based in School Support. The Teacher for transient families works very closely with schools, Harbour and North Tyneside Council Housing Advice team to ensure there is effective coordination with all partner agencies and prompt engagement with transient families.

Transient families may have difficulty accessing services that they need, identifying new school places and securing admission to schools. By engaging in this multi-agency approach, our school is committed to supporting transient families to ensuring that their children access our school when needed and are supportive of their specific needs.

We will also link with the local authority who can also support with travel costs, housing advice and signposting to other relevant services.

The teacher for transient families liaises with a named link worker in school who will engage with the family and will understand the reasons for homelessness. There is commitment to establish an effective partnership which supports the child and parent. The amount of intervention varies according to family circumstances and individual need.

Process/Action to be taken

We will engage with process of involvement as outlined in the flow diagram/process for the Teacher for transient families. See Annex A.

Sometimes children who already attend our school become transient and the Teacher for transient families will notify school and ensure that the information is shared with the Key adult.

Also, if the Teacher for transient families has arranged for a family to move into our school from another area, they will inform the Key adult in school of their involvement with the family. The teacher for transient families will also notify:-

- The Attendance and Placement Officer for Children Missing from Education (CME)/Elective Home Education (EHE) The previous school
- School Health Service and where relevant, Health Visitor
- Children's Social Care where relevant

Should there be plans for the family to move to another area, then the new updated information is provided to the school. The teacher for transient families then shares it promptly with the receiving Local Authority. This minimises the risk that any child's whereabouts may be unknown. Infrequently parents' who choose to Electively Home Educate their child(ren) come into temporary emergency accommodation. This information is also shared by the Transient teacher with the Attendance and Placement Officer for Children Missing from Education (CME)/Elective Home Education (EHE)

If a family is leaving North Tyneside whether this be due to recurring risk or a desire to settle elsewhere, the Teacher for transient families ensures that a receiving school(s) has been identified and a smooth transition is carefully planned. The CME/EHE officer is also notified.

School and classroom support

As a school we support transient children by ensuring a named link worker in school to co-ordinate with relevant agencies and services on these matters. This person in our school is Rhiannon Studholme (Education Welfare Officer).

In line with the current KCSE, we share information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including transient children, are experiencing, or have experienced, with relevant teachers and school staff in order to promote their welfare and educational outcomes.

We ensure that staff understand academic progress and attainment of these children and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort. We support teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments to be made to best support these children.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary.

Annex A

Teacher for Transient Children Service: Background

Children and families move into and out of temporary accommodation for a variety of different reasons such as domestic abuse, rent and mortgage arrears, repossession of property by private landlord or Council, fleeing violence, relationship breakdown, end of Assured Short hold tenancy and overcrowding. Families who have been supported by National Asylum Seeker Service may present as homeless once they have received leave to remain in the UK.

Women and children fleeing domestic abuse may seek refuge in Harbour (North Tyneside).

Other transient families may be placed into temporary emergency dispersed properties and very occasionally it may be necessary to have a brief stay in a bed and breakfast guest house.

North Tyneside Council also has a scheme called *New Beginnings* which provides short-term accommodation for up to two years for young parents aged 16 to 25. They may also have school aged children.

North Tyneside Council is committed to providing a responsive, reliable, joined-up and high-quality service for transient families where there is a strong emphasis and belief in effective partnership work.

What service do we provide?

North Tyneside Council has a designated teacher who supports transient families. She works very closely with Harbour and North Tyneside Council Housing Advice team. There is effective coordination with all partner agencies to ensure that there is prompt engagement with transient families.

There is a risk that families who are transient may find it difficult to find services that they need. Admission to schools and identification of new school places may be problematic but North Tyneside Council is committed to ensuring that children access our schools and are supportive of their specific needs.

Where it is safe for children to attend their 'usual' school, then it is expected that attendance will continue. In some circumstances assistance with travel costs will be provided. Schools welcome transient families and are keen to understand their individual circumstances and to provide and to signpost support accordingly.

The teacher for transient families liaises with a designated member of school staff who will welcome the family and will understand the reasons for homelessness. There is commitment to establish an effective partnership which supports the child and parent. The amount of intervention varies according to family circumstances and individual need.

What issues are we trying to address?

Homelessness and living in temporary emergency accommodation – sometimes separated from family, friends and familiar support networks can impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of adults and children.

- It may interrupt a child's education, access to learning and progress.
- Professionals in North Tyneside work in a joined-up way with the parent(s) to ensure that children do not become dis-engaged from services and support networks.
- The parents of transient families are encouraged to become fully involved with school and their child's education. They quickly become valued members of the school community.
- Supported access to school and engagement with local services reduces the risk of a transient family's exclusion and isolation.

Where families are transient there is a risk that information may not be shared in a timely manner and that key safeguarding information is not received by those that need it most. When families move into North Tyneside from elsewhere, the Attendance and Placement Officer for Children Missing from Education (CME) / Elective Home Education (EHE) is notified. Should the family move away, then the new updated information is provided to the Officer who then shares it promptly with the receiving Local Authority. This minimises the risk that any child's whereabouts may be unknown. Infrequently parents' who choose to

Electively Home Educate their child(ren) come into temporary emergency accommodation. This information is also shared with the Officer.

If a family is leaving North Tyneside – whether this be due to risk or a desire to settle elsewhere, the Teacher for transient families ensures that a receiving school(s) has been identified and a smooth transition is carefully planned.

North Tyneside Council ensures that during the turbulent and challenging times of homelessness, the children are in education and that family circumstances are respectfully heard and understood by key adults in our schools and with partner agencies.

How will we know if we have been successful?

Children and their parents as our focus are pivotal to the work that we undertake. We are committed to safeguarding them and to ensuring that they receive effective support throughout the period of homelessness. We listen carefully to feedback to help us maintain and develop the service. We judge ourselves successful if the interruption to learning is limited and the majority of the children and young people will maintain access to full time education offer.

Simplified standard flow diagram showing involvement of the Teacher for transient families (T/t) service: - Oct 2020

As every transient case is different, there will be slight variations to due process

