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**Looked After Children Policy
for Laurus Trust Primary Schools**

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Definition

Children and young people become 'Looked After Children (LAC)' if they have been taken into care by the Local Authority, or have been accommodated by the Local Authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or placed at home with their natural parent(s). LAC will have a care manager who arranges their care plan.

Legal Framework

Laurus Trust Primary Schools are committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000 and DfEE/DOH Guidance 2000, DfE *'Promoting the education of looked after children (2014)'* and the Children Act (2004). The Children Act places a duty to safeguard LAC, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential". The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of Local Authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles: *prioritising education; having high expectations; inclusion – changing and challenging attitudes; achieving continuity and stability; early intervention – priority action; and listening to children.*

Responsibility of the Head of School

The Head of School recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of LAC, when compared with their peers and is committed to all playing an influential role in providing quality education for all pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes and ensuring that the Designated Teacher and staff carry out their responsibilities effectively. The Head of School will, therefore:

- Appoint the Designated Teacher. Regulations (2009): *'require that the person designated is a qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school'* (regulation 3(2)).
- Ensure the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training about school admission arrangements; Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities; attendance and exclusions.
- Provide an annual report to the Local Governing Body on the number of Looked After pupils in school; their attendance; attainment levels and general well-being.

Responsibility of the Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB of Laurus Primaries will:

- Ensure the school has a comprehensive policy for LAC and review the effective implementation of this policy at least every two years.
- Ensure that there is a named Designated Governor for LAC.
- Ensure that the Designated Governor links with the Designated Teacher and receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the LGB.
- Ensures that the Designated Teacher has received appropriate training.
- Ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions.
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for LAC.

- For safeguarding and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.
- Ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give LAC equal access in respect of: admission to school; *the National Curriculum and public examinations; additional educational support where this is needed; extra-curricular activities; work experience and careers guidance.*

Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for LAC.
- Ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for the child and carer/s (and parent/s where possible). Note any specific requirements, including care status.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed (within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer/s (and parent/s if possible), in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any Initial Support, School Focus Plan (SFP), Educational Health Care Plan, career plan or any other relevant plans.
- Ensure that each LAC has an identified member of staff that they can talk to.
- Ensure entry to examinations for all LAC, to co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary.
- Encourage LAC to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning using LAC funding as needed.
- Ensure staff and governors receive relevant information and training.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis.
- Provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible.
- Seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

Responsibility of All Staff

- To have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of LAC.
- To ensure entry to examinations for LAC.
- To be familiar with the Guidance on LAC.
- To respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings.
- To liaise with the Designated Teacher where a LAC is experiencing difficulty.

Personal Education Plan

All LAC have a care plan, of which the Personal Education Plan (PEP) is an integral part and is led by their social worker and supported by school. The Designated Teacher will lead on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored.

The Voice of the Child

Laurus Trust Primary Schools are committed to understanding the importance of listening to and taking account of the child's wishes and feelings about their education and social and emotional development.

Training

The Head of School, Designated Teacher and Professional Learning Lead will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in all statutory guidance.