



## ***Looked After Children Policy***

### ***Rationale***

*Looked after children (LAC) are recognised nationally as one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of looked after children have suffered abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that considerable educational underachievement exists when compared to their peers. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'looked after' 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 Court 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 'Looked After Children' (LAC). They may be looked after by the Local Authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in the County of Durham.*

### ***Introduction***

*Laurel Avenue Community Primary School aims to promote the educational attainment, achievement and welfare of looked after children. The statutory guidance introduced two key measures:*

- 1. To ensure that a Designated Teacher is nominated in every school.*
- 2. To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all LAC.*

*Our Governing Body are committed to ensuring that the Designated Teachers and staff at Laurel Avenue are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.*

*The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is Gaynor Davison.*

*The Designated Governor for Looked After Children is Ann Elliott.*

*The Governing Body is committed to providing a quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in “Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004” (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of looked after children.*

### ***Aims***

*The aims of the school are to:*

- ◆ *ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for looked after children as for all children.*
- ◆ *ensure that all looked after children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, providing a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual’s needs and ability.*
- ◆ *ensure that looked after pupils take as full a part as possible in school activities.*
- ◆ *ensure that carers and social workers of looked after pupils are kept fully informed of their child’s progress and attainment.*
- ◆ *ensure that looked after pupils are involved, where possible, in decisions affecting their future provision.*

### ***Admissions***

*The Governing Body endorses the Durham Council Policy for the admission of Looked After Children. Due to changes in care placements, looked after children may enter school at any time in the term. At Laurel Avenue we believe that it is vital that all new pupils receive a positive welcome and full transitional support for their inclusion in our learning community and specialist provision.*

### ***Equality***

*This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced and broad curriculum. Our LAC Policy reinforces the need for teaching and learning that is fully inclusive and that meets the individual needs of all children. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all looked after pupils where necessary.*

### ***Allocation of Resources***

*The Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. We will work in partnership with Durham County Council Virtual School for looked after children and other Virtual Schools for pupils who are from other Local Authorities, to ensure that looked after children receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve.*

### ***Monitoring the progress of Looked After Children***

*This school assesses each looked after pupil’s attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning. The social worker for the looked after child initiates a Personal Education Plan –*

*PEP - within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care, and ensures that the young person is actively involved. Following the initial PEP, the role of the Designated Teacher is to liaise with other agencies involved to arrange further PEP review meetings and provide copies of the PEP to the social worker, specialist caseworker from Durham County Virtual School (or other Virtual School, where the child is from another Local Authority) and any other relevant agencies. The allocation and purpose of the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) will be included within the PEP.*

### ***Record Keeping***

*The Designated Teacher knows all the looked after children in school and has access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers, Durham County Virtual School specialist staff, teacher/support worker, social worker and LAC Educational Psychologist. The status of looked after children are identified within the school's information systems so that information is readily available to all classroom teachers and relevant associate staff. LAC are identified as a vulnerable group when tracking, monitoring and reporting on attainment and progress.*

### ***Staff Development***

*We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support a LAC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to raise awareness of issues associated with LAC within the school and disseminate information. She has received training in relation to the criteria for writing a PEP and coordinating a PEP review, following the recent changes at LA level.*

### ***Partnership with parents/carers and care workers***

*We believe in developing strong partnerships with parents/carers and care workers to enable all children at Laurel Avenue to achieve their potential and aid their future economic well-being. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this collaboration and partnership working.*

### ***Links with external agencies/organisations***

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

*Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker  
Virtual School for Looked After Children (Looked After Children in Education Team)  
Other Virtual Schools for looked after children from other Local Authorities  
Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEND services  
Medical officers  
School nurses  
CAMHS  
External Learning Providers*

***LAC Policy Review and Evaluation***

*The Designated Teacher for LAC will undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the impact of the looked after children policy and practice each year and report to the Governing Body.*

*Sources of Additional Advice and Information:*

*Clive Norton, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Looked After Children*

*email : Clive.horton@durham.gov.uk*

*Lynn Lunn, Case Work Officer for Children in Care*

*Tel: - 03000 267800*

*Promoting the education of looked after children. (DfE Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014)*

*Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016.*

*Signed: G Davison*

*Headteacher*

*Date: October 2017*

*Signed: C Linfoot*

*Chair of Community and SMSC Committee*

*Date: October 2017*

*Review: October 2020*