

**'BROADENING EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS'
FOR LOOKED AFTER & VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

A PLEDGE

As the Head of an independent school committed to providing transformational educational opportunities for those who need them most, I welcome the Independent Review into Children's Social Care (2022) recommendation that **thousands more children in care should be able to access an independent education.**

To that end I pledge that my school will:

1. Support the Department for Education's 'Broadening Educational Pathways for Looked After & Vulnerable Children' (BEP) programme by **offering priority to care-experienced children¹ when making admissions decisions and awarding financial support;**
2. Ensure that **appropriate staff and financial resources are in place to meet the needs of care-experienced children supported through the BEP scheme,** and that all relevant staff have access to the training necessary to ensure those needs are met.

The Care Review identified that *'the state is not a pushy enough parent ... when it comes to accessing the education that children in care need.'*

There are nearly 500,000 children who are 'Looked After' or identified as being 'in need' in the UK today, and evidence repeatedly shows us that they face some of the greatest educational obstacles and poorest outcomes of any young people. Their educational and social experiences are often disastrous; both for for these children and in terms of the costs to the state, which is calculated to be more than £6bn p/a in social care and long-term support, as a result of their poor outcomes.

In making this pledge, I recognise the importance of:

- careful 'matching' of the right child for the right school, taking into consideration the child's academic, pastoral and broader needs and interests, a decision made through partnership between schools and Local Authority children's services professionals with inputs from within the centralised BEP delivery team as needed
- ensuring that schools offering BEP bursary places for a care-experienced young people are arranged when schools are sufficiently well-equipped and ready to support vulnerable children to thrive;
- partnership between the Local Authority and school in monitoring the progress of each child to ensure adaptations are put in place throughout preparation, transition and placements.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

¹ those who are *Looked After or identified as being 'in need'* (LAC/CIN)