



Registered Charity No. 1033185

Title:	<b>LOOKED AFTER CHILD POLICY</b>
Outcome Statement:	We are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff in our provision are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.
To meet the standards as part of:	Early Years Alliance Ofsted EYFS
Applicable to & For use by:	Pre-school Staff, Committee Members, Volunteers, Students Parents / Carers
Appendices:	
Last reviewed:	January 2024 (manager's name changed May 24)
Reviewed by:	Hainford & Frettenham Pre-school Manager / Chairperson
Date of Committee Meeting policy adopted at:	
Chairperson Name and Signature:	
Review Date:	January 2025

## Looked After Child Policy & Procedures

Children become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by the local authority or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most looked after children will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).

We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations; physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken into the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has an impact on their emotional well-being.

We place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient, and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children are based on two important concepts, attachment, and resilience. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives, as the foundation for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and enable the development of positive dispositions for learning. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.

### *Principles*

- The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.
- We offer places to two-year-old children and three- and four-year-olds who are in care.
- Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer, we will continue to offer the placement for the child.

### **Procedures**

The designated person for looked after children is the designated child protection lead practitioner.  
Child Protection Lead Practitioner: Louisa Coleman

Every child is allocated a key person shortly after starting, and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated person ensures the key person has the information, support, and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.

The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensure that appropriate information is gained and shared.

The setting recognises the role of the local authority children's social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially regarding the birth parent's or foster carer's role in relation to the setting, without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.

At the start of a placement a professionals meeting will be held to determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates the child's learning needs from their care plan. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is written and put in place, coordinated by the child's social worker alongside the child's foster carers and representatives from the setting (either the Supervisor or Key Person.). The PEP is reviewed every 3 months.

The care plan needs to consider issues for the child such as:

- their emotional needs and how they are to be met.
- how any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed.
- their sense of self, culture, language(s) and identity – and how this is to be supported.
- their need for sociability and friendship.
- their interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway; and
- how any special needs will be supported.
- 

In addition, the care plan will also consider:

- how information will be shared with the foster carer and local authority (as the 'corporate parent') as well as what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored
- what contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be at the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed.
- what written reporting is required
- wherever possible, and where the plan is for the child's return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning; and
- with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the setting's activities that include parents, such as outings and fun-days etc alongside the foster carer.

The settling-in process for the child is agreed. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a sufficient relationship with his or her key person for them to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, so time needs to be allowed for it to take place without causing further distress or anxiety to the child.

In the first two weeks after settling-in, the child's well-being is the focus of observation, their sociability and their ability to manage their feelings with or without support. Further observations about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage prime and specific areas of learning and development.

Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.

If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social care worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure.

Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.

The transition to school will be handled sensitively. The designated person and/or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents.