

Looked after children

Policy statement

At Jack and Jill's Pre School 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.

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 in to 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, thus may affect their ability to learn, be healthy and happy.

Our policy is therefore based on the important concept of making secure attachments, so the child is in a safe and happy place where they can flourish and learn.

We do this by working to enhance the child's emotional well-being. This is developed by providing a flexible settling in period and regular intervals where carers can contribute and become involved in the child's learning. We also aim to build strong relationships between children and all members of staff, especially their Key Worker. These relationships underpin the child's ability to learn and develop. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled and formed attachments with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.

- We will always offer 'stay and play' provision for a child who is still settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.
- 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 Manager Anna Zeneli, she is also the designated child protection co-ordinator and Behaviour Officer.
- Every child is allocated a key person and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated person for Looked After Children (the Manager) ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- The designated person (Manager) 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.

- At the start of a placement there is a professionals meeting to determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates the child's learning needs. This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and thereafter at half termly intervals.
- 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.
 - 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 the focused learning tasks, requested for parents/carers to work on at home - following the child's Focus Week at Preschool;
 - The settling-in process for the child is agreed.
- 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 private 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 (Manager) 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.

Manager's Signature and date:

Deputy Manager Signature: