

Looked After Children

Policy Statement- Denmead Day Care

Our setting is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive quality environment for all children and families. The description 'looked after' is generally used to describe a child who is looked after by the local authority. This includes children who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care. Most looked after children will be cared for by foster carers with a small minority in children's homes, looked after by family members or even placed back within the family home.

The legal framework for this policy is underpinned by or supported through:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Act (1989)
- Adoption & Children Act (2002)
- Children & Young Person Act (2002).

The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; but this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others or referred to using acronyms such as LAC. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled appropriately with their carer. At Denmead Day Care, we treat each child as an individual. Discussions will take place regarding the length of time the child has been with their carer before they start to distinguish if they have secured a relationship and are ready to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them. We are aware that there are a number of reasons why a child may go in to care and these reasons may or may not include traumatic experiences or abuse. All practitioners are committed to doing all they can to support all children to achieve their full potential. The staff are all trained to understand our safeguarding policy and procedures. Additional training to support children's individual needs will be planned for where appropriate. Practitioners are supported by management at all times and we have an open door policy if they need to discuss any sensitive issues regarding the child.

Procedures

The designated person for 'looked after children' are:

Nursery

Manager - Michelle Josephs

Lead Safeguarding Officer – Naomi Parker and Michelle Josephs

- Each child will be allocated a key person. The key person will support the child initially with transition and settling in and then continue to support and build up a relationship with the child.
- An All About Me Form will be given to Carers for Social Workers to provide the basics of a LOC.
- Regular contact will be maintained with the carers throughout the child's time at the setting and with the social worker (where applicable).
- Regular ongoing practice such as observations will be carried out to build up a picture of the child's interests, and activities will be planned accordingly to support the child's stage of learning and development and interests.

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- This information will be shared with carers as well as any concerns surrounding their developmental stages.

Where necessary a Care Plan will be developed with carers and professionals.
This will include:

- The child's emotional needs and how they are to be met.
- How any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour is to be managed.
- The child's sense of self, culture, language/s and identity - how this is to be supported. The child's need for sociability and friendship.
- The child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway.
- How any special needs will be supported?

In addition, the Care Plan may 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 in the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed.
- Wherever possible, and where the plan is for the child to return to their home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning
- 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, fun days etc. alongside the foster carer.
- Where applicable, a Personal Education Plan (PEP) will also be completed for 3-5 year olds in partnership with the social worker and/or care manager and carers.
- We will also attend all appropriate meetings and contribute to reviews.
- Transition to school will be handled sensitively with the key worker and designated 'looked after' person working together with the child to ensure that this is as smooth as possible and all necessary information is shared.
- The child's individual file, including observations, photographs and pieces of art work and mark making will be passed on to the carer at this stage.

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