

Safeguarding children

Looked After Children

Policy Statement

The Island Day Nursery is committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff are committed to doing all they can to enable “looked after” children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Definition of “looked after” children (LAC): Children and young people 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 LAC 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 parents.

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 impact on their emotional well-being.

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 any child using acronyms such as LAC
- We offer places for funded three and four year olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education.
- We offer places for funded two year olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education.
- Where possible, we will offer ‘stay and play’ provisions for a child who is 2 to 5 years old who is still settling with the foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.
- If a child who normally attends The Island Day Nursery is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer we will continue to offer the placement for that child.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated child-protection co-ordinator.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start 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 Island Day Nursery recognises the role of the local authority social care department as the child’s ‘corporate parent’ and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to 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 the placement there is a professionals meeting that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan the incorporates the child’s learning needs.
- The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as:-
 - The child’s emotional needs and how they are met;
 - How any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are 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; 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 well what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored;
 - What contact the child has with his or 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 a child's return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the 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, 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 relationship with his or her key person sufficient 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.
 - 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 Island Day Nursery safeguarding children procedure.
 - Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
 - Transition to school will be handled sensitively and 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 parent(s).

Persons responsible for implementing this policy:

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Review: August 2021