

## Felixstowe Nursery School

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection**

**Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures to safeguard children.**

### Looked after children

#### **Statement:-**

Early years settings are 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.

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 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 often have 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 care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being. Most local authorities do not place children under five with foster carers who work outside the home; however there are instances when this does occur or where the child has been placed with another family member who works. It is not always considered appropriate for a looked after child who is under two years of age to be placed in a day-care setting in addition to a foster placement.

Our setting places an emphasis on promoting the children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children are based on these two important concepts, attachment and resilience. The basis is to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and are the basis in developing 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 the child using such acronyms as a LAC.
- In exceptional cases we offer places to two-year-old children who are in care. In such cases, the child should have been with the foster carer for at least two months

and show signs of having formed a secure attachment to the carer, and the placement in our setting will last a minimum of three months.

- We offer places for funded three and four- year -olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. We expect that a child will have been with a foster carer for a minimum of one month and has formed a secure attachment to the carer. We expect that the placement in the setting will last a minimum of six weeks.
- We will always offer a 'stay and play' provision for a child who is two and a half to five years old 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 a placement for the child.

### **Procedures:-**

The designated person for looked after children is the settings designated child protection co-ordinator.

- Every child is allocated a key person before they start the setting 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 ensures 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 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 a placement there is a professionals meeting that will 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 three months. Thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.
- The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as:
  - the child's emotional needs and how they are to be met;
  - how many 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.

An integral part of the care plan is the Personal education Plan (PEP) it is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to make expected progress and reach their potential. It should reflect a personal approach to the child's specific learning and promotes their aspirations and outcomes.

A copy of the completed PEP needs to be sent to Suffolk Virtual School (GCSx) inbox. (SuffolkVirtualSchool@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk) and to the child's Social Worker (corporate parent). A copy is retained by the nursery and is worked on and reviewed termly.

- 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 what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored;
  - what contact the child has with his/her parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be 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 settings 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.
- 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 abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social worker according to the settings 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 or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on the relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Felixstowe Nursery School.**

**Held on .....**

**Date to be reviewed.....**

**Signed by Chairperson.....**

**Signed by Manager.....**