

Looked After Children Policy

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.1 Child development 1.2 Inclusive practice 1.3 Keeping safe	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as partners 2.4 Key person	3.2 Supporting every child 3.4 The wider context	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

1. Policy statement

First Steps Pre-school 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.

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 under 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 impact on their emotional well-being.

At First Steps, we place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children aim to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience.

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.

2. 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. Monitoring of children who fall into 'groups' is anonymous and in line with ensuring inclusion for all children.

Places are not offered to babies and children under two years who are in care; instead other services such as Noah's Ark are offered to enable a child to play and engage with other children where the carer stays with the child.

Places may be offered to two year old children who are in care. In such cases, the child should have been with the foster carer for a settling period of 2 months with the view to the placement lasting more than three months.

Funded places for three and four-year-olds who are in care are offered to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. In these cases, the child should have been with the foster carer for a settling period of one month with the view to the placement lasting more than three months.

As with all children attending the setting, we can offer funded 3 and 4 year olds who are in care up to 15 hours per week entitlement. We are also part of the two year old funding scheme.

We will always offer a foster carer to stay with the child until settled into the preschool, this is part of our settling in policy for all children attending First Steps.

Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care we will continue to offer the placement for the child.

Places are not offered to babies and children under two years who are in care; instead other services such as Noah's Ark are offered to enable a child to play and engage with other children where the carer stays with the child.

'Stay and play' provision will be offered for a child who is two to five years old who is still settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.

These procedures are written in line with current guidance Early Years Foundation Stage – (EYFS). The supervisor is responsible for ensuring all staff understand and follow these procedures.

3. Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the safeguarding officer, Andrea Jolly.
- Every child is allocated a key person. This is no different for a looked after child. The safeguarding officer ensures they have 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 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 parents or foster carer's role in relation to the pre-school without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- A Care Plan will be drawn up to incorporate the child's needs and a settling in process agreed.
- The care plan should consider eg
 - The child's emotional needs and how they are to be met,
 - How any emotional issues that affect behaviour are to be managed,
 - How any special needs should be supported
 - How and with who information should be shared.(see full guidance).
- 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.
- Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with 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 parents.

4. Disseminating and Implementing this Policy

All pre-school staff will be required to read this policy on their induction and to comply with the contents of the policy.

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by pre-school staff.

If incidences of non-compliance do occur, this will be dealt with on a case by case basis through performance management of staff.

Any adverse incidents will be recorded and reviewed to ensure the policy is fit for purpose.

The policy will be formally reviewed at least every 3 years.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

First Steps Fountain Of Life Pre-School

Held on (date)

Signed on behalf of the Management Team

Role of signatory (e.g, chairperson etc)

Review date
