



Northrepps Pre-School Looked After Children Policy

Policy reviewed and updated: November 2018

Next review: November 2019

Signature:

Executive Headteacher:

Date: 29-11-18

Signature:

Chair of Governors:

Date: 29/11/18

Policy statement

Northrepps Pre-School are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. Staff are also committed to provide the best support to enable 'looked after children' reach their full potential.

Definition of Looked After Children (LAC)

The term 'looked after children' is defined in law under the Children Act 1989.

A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the local authority. Looked after children often fall into four groups:

- Children who are accommodated under voluntary agreement with their parents
- Children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order
- Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

We recognise that children who have been or are a looked after child may have experienced traumatic experiences throughout some or all of their childhood. This has an impact on the wellbeing of the child which in turns affects the learning and development. Not all children are taken into care due to abuse, however the separation from their families and home causes disruption in their emotional well-being.

We place an emphasis to promote children's well-being, confidence, to be resilient, listened to, to enhance the ability for children to be strong through staff empathy and understanding. All children learn and develop at an individual pace and staff will ensure that they are supporting and facilitating learning at the correct level for individual children.

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.
- We prioritise the well-being of the children to enable them to feel safe and secure to aid individual learning and develop across the curriculum.
- We share high expectations alongside the local authority and the families who are accommodating the child to enhance the well-being and development of children.
- We encourage inclusive practice across the setting to ensure we are meeting the individual needs of the child taking into account the changing and challenging attitudes that may be presented due to previous experiences.
- We aim to provide continuity and stability for children through the allocation of the key person.
- We listen to children and support them to have a voice.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is **Emily Norton at Erpingham and at Northrepps**.
- 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 ensures appropriate information is gained and shared.
- The setting 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 a placement there is a professionals meeting that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a Personal Education Plan PEP that incorporates and the child's learning needs. The PEP plan is provided by the child's social worker.
- The settling-in process for the child is agreed and is 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 firm a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage 6 areas of learning.
- 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 setting's safeguarding children procedure.